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Admiral Hipper as Naval Commander.

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ADMIRAL HIPPER AS NAVAL COMMANDER

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in War Studies of the University of London
King's College



ADMIRAL HIPPER AS NAVAL COMMANDERABSTRACT

This work is intended to fill a gap in the historiography of World War I by providing the first definitive study of a German naval front commander. Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper is known to history as the commander of the German battle cruisers at Jutland and the last commander of the High Seas Fleet. This study contributes an original interpretation of Hipper based on detailed research and facts essential to scholarly knowledge of his place in War Studies.

An examination of Hipper's middle class Bavarian origin, early education, formal naval training and experience indicates that he was highly regarded by his early commanders and that his rise to flag rank was influenced both by his competence and exposure to royalty at decisive moments in his career. Hipper's views on new underwater weapons, communications, logistics, personnel and shipbuilding clearly demonstrate that the naval environment was unfavourable to German commanders, especially as regards logistics. Parenthetically, the evolution of the German battle cruiser force and its command structure was in large part due to Hipper's efforts. Hipper's strategical and tactical thought on submarines, aircraft

and surface forces provides insight into his performance in combat crises and the war-time record of the High Seas Fleet. Hipper's impact on the technical aspects of naval policy was not reflected in national policy although his plan for a battle cruiser raid on British Atlantic sea communications is strikingly similar to Erich Raeder's World War II operations.

Hipper's role in the German naval mutinies, revolution and collapse of 1918 was one of firmness and moderation, manifesting a desire to avoid a 'bloodbath' and establishing a reasonable doubt that he participated in an 'admirals' rebellion' or planned an unconsummated naval 'suicide sortie.'

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GLOSSARY
(Abbreviations Used in Text or Notes)

Adm	Admiralty Manuscripts, London
A.G.	Scouting Group, German
I.A.G.	First Scouting Group, German
II-IV A.G.	Second, Third and Fourth Scouting Groups, German
AHMK	Imperial Naval Cabinet
A.W.S.	Admiralty War Staff, British Admiralty 1914-1918
BA/MA	Federal German Military Archives, Freiburg
B.C.F.	British Battle Cruiser Fleet
B.C.S.	British Battle Cruiser Squadron
B.d.A.	Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, German
I.B.d.A.	Senior Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, German
II.B.d.A.	Deputy Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, German
CRG	Captured Record Group, U.S. National Archives
D.N.C.	British Director of Naval Construction
G.F.	Grand Fleet, British
I.G.	First Battle Squadron, German
II-V.G.	Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Battle Squadrons, German
H.F.	Home Fleet, British
H.M.S.	His Majesty's Ship, British
H.S.F.	High Seas Fleet, German
K.d.H.	High Seas Fleet Command, Forces Afloat
K.T.B.	War Diary, German Official
M.G.F.A.	Federal German Office of Military History
NIACC	Naval Inter-Allied Commission of Control
P.R.O.	Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London
R.M.A.	Imperial German Naval Office
S.K.L.	German Naval High Command, August-December 1918
S.M.S.	His Majesty's Ship, German
USNA	United States National Archives
W.T.	Wireless Telegraphy
WUA	Proceedings of the Reichstag Committee of Inquiry on the Causes of the German Collapse in 1918

INTRODUCTION

The historiography of World War I at sea does not yet include a definitive study of a German naval front commander. There are some autobiographies, apologia and published papers as well as a few articles on the High Seas Fleet commanders. The subject of the only biography published thus far is Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper, commander of the German Scouting Forces at Jutland and the last High Seas Fleet Commander. Unfortunately, there are some major problems with this work by Capt. Hugo von Waldeyer-Hartz who like Hipper, was an officer in the Imperial German Navy. While useful for vignettes about Hipper's personal life and some aspects of his war career, it is seriously deficient in the author's use of sources, and it suffers from the time in which it was written and published--Germany, 1933.

Waldeyer-Hartz had the Nachlass Hipper available to him but used it somewhat capriciously, especially in his treatment of the 1918 naval mutinies. Also, Hipper's service record appears to have been used early in the book but Waldeyer-Hartz ignores it in Hipper's relations with Scheer who gave Hipper a less than outstanding report in 1917, the last such report in Hipper's service record.

Further, the proceedings of the Reichstag Committee of Inquiry on the German collapse in 1918, extending from 1919 to 1928, were open to Waldeyer-Hartz yet he did not use the complete record available on the mutiny, possibly because it would not have agreed with his account which is generally devoid of criticism of the officer corps.

His chapter on 'Fleet Building and Peace Training' is essentially a recapitulation of Tirpitz' viewpoint on the German naval buildup with one paragraph on Hipper. His treatment of Hipper's professional development is very thin, especially at the time Hipper reached flag rank. The account of wartime actions, though interesting and largely in accord with official documents, eschews Hipper's planning role, his good professional relations and strategic thinking under Admirals von Ingenohl and von Pohl and omits entirely Hipper's difficulties with Scheer and Tirpitz. In the latter case, Waldeyer-Hartz ignored Tirpitz' published criticism of Hipper.

Finally, there is the matter of the biography's date of publication--1933. That year in Germany the Reich Chamber of Culture was established by the Nazis to control writers, publishers and libraries.¹ Waldeyer-Hartz seems to have anticipated the requirements of this body. The

¹ George L. Mosse, Nazi Culture, (New York, 1966), p.135.

book on Hipper is imbued with a budding national socialist Weltanschauung, especially in the first chapter entitled 'Youth.' Filled with simplistic, irrational and Volk philosophy, this section pays homage to the 'innately superior element of Aryan culture in world history.' Furthermore, Waldeyer-Hartz goes so far as to say his 'personal opinion' is that the 'Nordic and Germanic races are superior sailors on biological and spiritual ground.' With these deficiencies and the sporadic citation of sources, the work hardly can be classed as a definitive study of Admiral Hipper.

Additional academic motivation to examine Hipper lies in the fact that he has been characterized by several writers as a significant naval officer of World War I. Scheer in his autobiography labels Hipper 'an outstanding battle hardened commander.' Arthur Marder, in assessing Hipper's conduct of the battle cruisers at Jutland, calls him 'superb.' H. H. Frost, the American authority on the German fleet in the first world war, also regarded Hipper highly. Admirals Raeder, Ruge and Dönitz all have the highest regard for him. Geoffrey Bennett said that '... in Hipper they had the ablest admiral on either side in the whole war.'² With the exception of Scheer, all these opinions were offered after Hipper's biography was published.

When Hipper died in 1932 at the age of sixty-nine, Admiral Sir David Beatty, his principal antagonist in war, said of him: 'I am very sorry. One would like to express regret for the passing of a gallant officer and a great sailor.'

Four recent works begin to develop Hipper's role in larger contexts: Holger Herwig's study, The German Naval Officer Corps, cites Hipper's personal journal and some of his official papers. The journal is used but not cited in David Woodward's recent popular work, The Collapse of Power. Wilhelm Deist uses Hipper's personal journal and some of his official papers in a collection of published documents, Militär und Innenpolitik 1914-1918, which record the military and domestic political scene in Germany. Some documents by Hipper appear in the Reichstag Committee of Inquiry's record of the internal German collapse. Daniel Horn's work, The German Naval Mutinies of World War I, is the most critical of Hipper yet it lacks citation of his personal journal among those Horn used. There is one superficial article about Hipper by Fritz E. Giese in Soldat und Technik, published in 1962. Hipper himself wrote only one letter for publication and nothing in self-justification. The letter was in response to a request for comment from H. H. Frost on an article Frost wrote on Jutland for the U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings in 1919.

In order to produce a serious study of Hipper as a naval commander, a wide search of archives was undertaken. Both official and private papers in the Freiburg Military Archive, one German state archive, as well as official documents of the British and American navies were necessarily included. The paucity of direct source material posed an initial problem since a substantial portion of Hipper's official papers was lost when his flagship, S.M.S. Lützow, took its secret archive to the bottom of the North Sea on 1 June 1916. Also, Hipper's private wartime correspondence, with the exception of his journal, was destroyed in a fire-bombing raid on Munich in the summer of 1944. These regrettable losses were reconstructed in so far as possible from other sources including some 43 files of the Imperial German Navy's Admiralty Staff, 25 files in records of the Imperial Naval Cabinet, 19 Naval Archive files (post-war compendiums of reports on which the official history is based), 10 Imperial Naval Office files, and 9 collections of private papers of German naval officers. Additional archival information was yielded by approximately 50 files of British and 14 files of United States documents. Most of these related documents are recorded in the bibliography and are intended as a research cross index of selected German naval documents in Washington, London, and Freiburg.

Briefly, the above material is used in conjunction with certain major new works on the Imperial German Navy, notably Herwig's and Gemzell's studies, to provide a more comprehensive picture of Hipper.

Part I of 'Hipper as a Naval Commander' deals with his career before the war. His service record, manoeuvre reports in the Admiralty Staff and Naval Cabinet archives and Imperial Naval Office documents on the evolution of the High Seas Fleet were all useful in documenting Hipper's performance as a junior officer and captain of various ships. His opinions on manning and personnel, the pre-war readiness levels of his forces, his role in the training and formation of the German battle cruiser force-- in short, the progress of his personal rise to flag rank-- are considered in this section. Mission, tactics and organization, especially the evolution of the billet of Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, are also explored. Some of the above is treated in his biography but little has been documented either there or in other works.

Part II examines certain aspects of Hipper's naval environment. It was found that German, British and American documents indicate a unanimity among surface force commanders, including Hipper, on the problems created by new naval weapons. His opinions are seen here in context and documented for the first time, as are other aspects of the naval environment including the progress of

German fleet wireless communications in the 1907-1918 period and Hipper's involvement. Problems relating to logistics, including Tirpitz's erroneous claim of German shell superiority, and the critical limitations of fuel, personnel and materiel are considered in broad perspective.

Documents of the Imperial Naval Office have allowed the writer to present for the first time the decision-making process which led to the construction of Germany's first battle cruiser. They also demonstrate why Hipper suffered from numerical inferiority. Finally, Hipper's views on possible improvements to his ships and his concept of the ideal capital ship are also presented for the first time.

Part III concerns Hipper's relations with the high command. Research indicated that front commanders including Hipper had very little influence on either the naval or national high commands, with the possible exception of Scheer. Also, the documents examined show the Tirpitz-Hipper relationship was a great deal less than friendly; Tirpitz twice tried to have Hipper relieved.

Other new discoveries include Hipper's role as a major operations planner under Ingenohl. A proposal of particular significance was his plan for a battle cruiser raid on British Atlantic sea communications and British bases in North America. This closely resembles the German strategy in World War II used by Erich Raeder, Hipper's

chief of staff when the cruiser plan was written. Further, Hipper's relations with Ingenohl appear to have been cordial and professionally correct, though by 24 January 1915 when Hipper returned from the Dogger Bank battle, relations were strained to the breaking point. As to the battle itself, new evidence from Imperial Naval Office documents shows Hipper's decision to take the armoured cruiser Blücher in his force was not a professional mistake, as some have asserted. Hipper's strategical overview after the battle is remarkably similar to that of Churchill and Fisher.

Part III also delineates and documents Hipper's official opinion on the U-boat for the first time. He did not believe it was a panacea in 1915. Another discovery was that Hipper had a clear strategical perception of Germany's situation, one very similar to Arthur Marder's interpretation. His ideas on flying machines and zeppelins, also hitherto undisclosed, reveal considerable foresight when made in the summer of 1915. He said: 'Should we make as great an effort in air weapons as in underwater weapons it would give us absolute superiority over all other nations in the world.'

Hipper's work under Scheer, however, shows a waning of his influence on the fleet command, especially in operational planning.

Hipper's official and personal accounts of Jutland and his appreciation of the action are cited together for the first time and indicate a determination to counter fast British battleships and battle cruisers with a similar German 'flying squadron.'

Other discoveries were the differences between Hipper and Scheer on professional matters with a certain unhappiness or even envy on the latter's part about Hipper's performance. Despite their differences, however, it appears Scheer believed Hipper the best man to command the fleet in August 1918 when Scheer was given control over all naval operations and the war was all but lost. A fuller description of Hipper's selection as Fleet C-in-C was provided by the documents researched.

Part IV of this work analyzes Hipper's role in the mutiny and revolution accompanying the German collapse. The evidence does not confirm Hipper's participation in an 'admirals' rebellion' or his planning of a 'suicide sortie.' In dealing with the mutinies, documents indicate Hipper followed a consistent approach of firmness and moderation. In dealing with the revolution, his avowed goal was to 'keep it within bounds' so that it 'would not turn into a bloodbath.'

In sum, this study of Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper is an attempt to satisfy the need for a definitive study of a German naval front commander in World War I.

PART I

HIPPER BEFORE THE WAR

The Early Years

Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper, the last commander of the German High Seas Fleet in World War I, had a healthy fear of the sea tempered with the knowledge of a professional seaman. Born neither to influence nor great wealth, his rise to high command in the Imperial German Navy came in the post-Bismarckian era when autocracy and limited parliamentary democracy co-existed uneasily within the framework of the constitution of the Second Reich.

To understand Hipper as naval commander, it is necessary to study his family background, early education and formal naval training which grounded his rise to significant responsibility at sea in the first World War. Repeating a truism, no man is an island. There are questions which must be asked about the socio-economic, educational and political matrix in which Hipper matured, questions which must be answered to evaluate and validate Franz Hipper in his contemporary context.

The son of of a middle-class Bavarian shopkeeper, Franz Hipper was born 13 September 1863 to Anton and Anna Hipper of Weilheim,¹ a small town about 40 miles south of Munich. Little more than three years later his father died,² leaving Anna to care for Franz and his three brothers.³ At the age of five, Hipper was sent to a Catholic grammar school in Munich⁴ where the education he received was likely to be laced heavily with religion.

¹ A trip was made by the writer to Weilheim, Bavaria, on 17 November 1972 to ascertain if any papers or important relics of the admiral were kept in the town. A visit to the offices of Dr. F. Bauer, Nr. 1 Burgermeister, resulted in the town museum being opened for a private visit. Only the admiral's full-dress uniform, sword, and two pictures remain. He is buried in the town cemetery in a grave that is hard to find. There are no papers at Weilheim, but his father's hardware business is still carried on briskly in the same store, location and building on Admiral Hipperstrasse.

² Hugo von Waldeyer-Hartz, Admiral von Hipper, (London, 1933), p. 6.

³ Hipper's brothers were Richard, a Munich attorney, Michael, who took over the business at Weilheim, and Anton, a chemical plant director in Hamburg. Fr. Gabriele Streitel, Richard's daughter, to the writer 28 June 1972. See also M.O.D., N.H.B., Nachlass Magnus von Levetzow, Reel 48, Frame 00913, Dr. Dir. Hipper to Levetzow.

⁴ BA/MA MGFA IM 46/13 Personal Akten Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper, 1863-1932, p. 107.

In 1873, when Hipper was ten years old, he was enrolled in the Gymnasium in Munich where he remained until 1879. It is probably fair to say that in these formative years and this level of education, 'indoctrination was more important than the spirit of free inquiry and reflective thought.'⁵ Hipper's generation was the first to experience massive popular education and the new urban way of life which followed the Industrial Revolution and as such, probably became 'accustomed to a standardized form of group discipline.'⁶ He pursued the Gymnasium curriculum which included such subjects as German, French, English, Latin, Greek, Geography, History, Religion, Mathematics, and some Science.⁷ He studied these subjects for six years, the objective of the curriculum being to produce a classical man. However, this classical influence may have been somewhat tempered by Hipper's acquaintance with Frederick Marryat's sea romances which in the opinion of his biographer, Waldeyer-Hartz,⁸ had a great deal to do

⁵ David Thompson, Europe Since Napoleon, (Cambridge, 1972), p. 339.

⁶ Ibid, p. 340.

⁷ Friedrich Paulsen, German Education Past and Present, (London, 1908), pp.197-220, see especially p. 204; Dr. Adolph Matthias, Geschichte des deutschen Unterrichts, (Munich, 1907), pp.218, 387; James E. Russell, German Higher Schools, The History, Organization and Methods of Secondary Education in Germany, (New York, 1899), pp. 121, 124, 125.

⁸ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

with Hipper's naval vocation. Hipper finished his Gymnasium studies in 1879 when he was 16 with an Obersekunda which Holger Herwig rates as the equivalent of an American high school graduate's diploma.⁹ The Obersekunda was awarded to persons who did not plan to pursue an academic career and hence did not go on to receive the Abitur. In Bavaria, however, after her defeat in 1866 while part of an Austrian alliance against Prussia, complete reforms of the Bavarian officer corps and army were undertaken. By 1868 universal military service had been introduced along with a reserve officer corps drawn from the Einjährig-Freiwilligen (one-year volunteers).¹⁰ From 1872 onward, Bavarian regular Army officers were required to pursue the Abitur¹¹ but it was not a reserve requirement.

Hipper enrolled in the Einjährig-Freiwilligen in 1879, and after receiving basic officer training for a year (paid for by his family in accordance with requirements of the reserve officer corps) decided to enter the navy. He attended Pressen or cram courses at Kiel to prepare for the naval entrance examination which he passed

⁹ Holger Herwig, The German Naval Officer Corps, (Oxford, 1973), p. 41.

¹⁰ Rudolph Absolon, Die Wehrmacht im Dritten Reich, vol. II, (Boppard am Rhein), 1971), p. 28.

¹¹ Herwig, op. cit., p. 46.

successfully. On 12 April 1881, at the age of 18, Franz Hipper entered the Imperial German Navy.¹²

The political milieu of Hipper's early years is no less significant than his education. While Hipper was in grammar school, several historical events of particular importance to his early background occurred: first, Bavaria, a political entity for 800 years, was made a part of Bismarck's Reich; second, the doctrine of Papal Infallibility was proclaimed; third, the Franco-Prussian war was fought; and finally, Bismarck's Kulturkampf was instituted to counter any possible political effects of the papal doctrine on German unity.¹³

While Hipper was studying in the Gymnasium, contemporary historians such as Leopold von Ranke, Johann Gustav Droysen, Heinrich von Sybel, Theodor Mommsen, and Heinrich von Treitschke were having their effect on German thinking. In fact, their writings of this period have been characterized as a watershed of nationalism in German history.¹⁴

¹² BA/MA Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., p. 107.

¹³ Michael Balfour, The Kaiser and His Times, (New York, 1972), p. 27.

¹⁴ Harry Elmer Barnes, A History of Historical Writing, (New York, 1962), pp. 208-211.

And while the German press at the time 'remained basically serious and educational in character, putting heavy emphasis on political issues, editorial opinion, and literary or philosophical articles,'¹⁵ German society was, as Balfour says, 'essentially masculine, laying exaggerated emphasis on toughness, self-sacrifice and discipline.'¹⁶ Nowhere was the stoic ideal¹⁷ more profoundly espoused than among the 'nobility of merit'¹⁸ created by the 'darling of the middle classes,'¹⁹ the Imperial German Navy. The best-known naval executive officers including Knorr, Koester, Tirpitz, Ingenohl, Pohl, Schröder, Capelle, Hipper, etc., were of bourgeois extraction.²⁰ All but Hipper, who was from Bavaria, came from northern and central Germany.

¹⁵ Thompson, op. cit., p. 342.

¹⁶ Balfour, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁷ Herwig, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁸ Jonathan Steinberg, Yesterday's Deterrent, (London, 1965), pp. 32-33.

¹⁹ Herwig, op. cit., p. 75.

²⁰ Holger Herwig, 'Zur Soziologie des Kaiserlichen Seeoffizierkorps vor 1914,' Marine und Marinepolitik im Kaiserlichen Deutschland 1891-1914, (Düsseldorf, 1972), p. 75.

The Genesis of an Admiral

The social, educational, political and economic background in which Hipper matured provided the foundation for his formal naval education and later experience. The mode of formation of Hipper's professional character, of his genesis as an admiral, should be prefaced by a brief explanation of the process of his admission into the navy. According to Holger Herwig, there were two schools of thought in the German navy regarding officer selection: the first consisted of those who believed that family background and character should be the primary considerations; the second, those who felt that higher formal education was more important.²¹ It would appear that the first school of thought was dominant at the time Hipper entered the navy since he and his cohorts were selected largely under an edict of Kaiser Wilhelm I which '...admonished Stosch²² "not to pay too much attention to the number of cadets accepted; the main issue remains the quality and internal homogeneity which the young men bring to their profession from their family background, for this is the foundation upon which the firm coherence of officer recruits can later be achieved..."'.²³ To get into the navy, Hipper had

²¹ Herwig, op. cit., pp. 43-45.

²² General Albrecht von Stosch, Chef der Admiralität, 1 Jan 1872-20 Mar 1883, a Prussian general who was C-in-C, Imperial German Navy, for the same period.

²³ Herwig, op. cit., p. 39. See also Waldeyer-Hartz, op.cit., p. 10.

to pass examinations in mathematics, natural science, English or French and drawing.²⁴ There is little doubt that his formal training was thorough and severe²⁵ and no doubt that without his family's financial support, it would not have occurred at all.²⁶

The course of formal training pursued by Hipper was as follows:²⁷

<u>Course</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Duration</u>
Probationary Sea Cadet.... (S.M.S. <u>Niobe</u>)	Apr 1881-Sept 1881...	5 months
Naval Cadet School..... (Kiel)	Sept 1881-Mar 1882...	6 months
Basic Gunnery School..... (S.M.S. <u>Mars</u>)	Apr 1882-May 1882...	6 weeks
Sea Training, Home Waters. (S.M.S. <u>Friedrich Karl</u>)	May 1882-Sept 1882...	5 months
Midshipman World Cruise... (S.M.S. <u>Leipzig</u>)	Oct 1882-Oct 1884...	2 years
Naval Officer School..... (Kiel)	Nov 1884-Apr 1885...	5 months
Executive Officer School.. (Kiel)	Oct 1885-Dec 1885...	3 months
Torpedo Officer Course.... (S.M.S. <u>Blücher</u>)	Oct 1890-Jan 1891...	4 months
Torpedoboat Instruction... (S.M.S. <u>Grille</u>)	Jan 1893-Feb 1893...	6 weeks
Admiralty Staff Journey... (S.M.S. <u>Grille</u>)	Jun 1897.....	17 days
Cruiser Gunnery Course.... (S.M.S. <u>Prinz Adalbert</u>)	Jan 1906.....	10 days
Battleship Gunnery Course. (S.M.S. <u>Schwaben</u>)	Apr 1906.....	10 days

²⁴ M.O.D., N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy, CB1182(E), 'Entry and Training of Executive Officers,' p. 4.

²⁵ M.O.D., N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy, CB1182(D), 'Officers,' p. 3. See also BA/MA F 3302 1e/PG 66706 Organization des Bildungswesens der Marine, Sept 1884-Apr 1914, 'Marine Schule.'

²⁶ Herwig, op. cit., pp. 54 ff. It cost about 7000 marks.

²⁷ BA/MA Personalakten Admiral Franz von Hipper, op. cit., Kommandos am Lande, Kommandos an Bord.

The final four courses of Hipper's formal naval training merit brief explanation. The Torpedo Officer Course marked his initiation into the ranks of torpedo-boat specialists and the so-called 'black art' of the 'Sea Hussars.'²⁸ The Admiralty Staff Journey provided him with exercises in collective planning, tactics and war-gaming²⁹ on a joint Army-Navy basis,³⁰ in short, his first formal exposure to strategy as participant. And the last two courses in gunnery served to bring Hipper abreast of improvements seen in the previous decade.³¹

Hipper, however, did not attend the one institution of higher learning in the Imperial German Navy--the Marine Akademie, or Naval War College, at Kiel. The Akademie was established by Stosch in 1872 expressly for the purpose of providing staff officers with an exposure to strategy³² and it would appear to have been the ideal place for Hipper to have furthered his education in this crucial area.

²⁸ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

²⁹ Walther Hubatsch, Der Admiralstab und die obersten Marinebehörden in Deutschland 1848-1945, (Frankfurt, 1958), p. 127.

³⁰ Carl-Axel Gemzell, Organization, Conflict and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning 1888-1940, (Lund, 1973), p. 42. See also Erich Raeder, My Life, (Annapolis, 1960), p. 23.

³¹ USNA, ONI Registers, RG 38, Box 119, Register 308, E-6-A, 'Training of German Naval Officers,' p. 1.

³² Albert Röhr, Handbuch der Deutschen Marine Geschichte, (Oldenburg/Hamburg, 1963), p. 56. See also Gemzell, op. cit., p. 41.

The Akademie's objective was 'to afford opportunities to officers of extending their general and professional knowledge, to inculcate a sound military judgment and to prepare officers for higher posts in the Navy.'³³ Emphasis was on technical subjects although national economics, general history and courses in English and other languages were available. Among the obligatory subjects were naval tactics, strategy and war-gaming. The curriculum covered two successive winters, and according to the German Naval Attache in Washington at the turn of the century, when Hipper^{cxo} normally would have attended, '...particularly capable lieutenants at an age of not more than 30 years may upon application and passing an examination attend the Naval Academy at Kiel.'³⁴ However, more senior officers were allowed to apply if their fleet service had precluded an opportunity for them to attend earlier.³⁵

³³ Naval Intelligence Division, Admiralty War Staff, German Navy 1919, 'Entry and Training of Executive Officers,' Admiralty Library, Earl's Court, CB 1182, (E), p. 17.

³⁴ USNA, R.G. 38, Office of Naval Intelligence Registers, Box 119, E-g-A 306 Captlt. Boy Ed, Naval Attache to Capt. C.D. Sigsbee, Chief Intelligence Officer, Navy Department, Washington, 26 Feb 1901, answer to question 20. See also M.O.D., N.I.D. A.W.S. German Navy, CB 1182 (E), op. cit., pp. 2-3.

³⁵ M.O.D., A.W.S., *ibid*, p. 17.

Approximately 20 men entered the Akademie each year after passing a test in English or French and submitting an essay on a subject chosen by themselves and treating naval policy, strategy, naval law, naval history, or general matters dealing with the science of war. Purely technical essays were not acceptable.³⁶

Upon admission, officers were required to produce³⁷ essays in each class with the subject chosen either from the course of study³⁸ or a list of topics provided by the Admiralty Staff. The essays had to be either naval strategical or grand strategical in nature.

In order to become an Admiralty Staff officer, at least until the Tirpitz regime, an officer had to have been selected to attend the Akademie.³⁹ Hipper was one of several fleet officers who held Admiralty Staff jobs⁴⁰ but did not have the formal education which was supposed to accompany such assignments. In fact, the number of

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Gemzell, op. cit., loc. cit.

³⁸ Ibidem. See also Erich Raeder, My Life, op. cit., p. 27. For a list of topics done by Raeder's class in 1903, see BA/MA F 33021e cited above.

³⁹ Gemzell, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴⁰ Hubatsch, op. cit., pp. 39 ff, 125-127. See also Gemzell, op. cit., p. 41, n.16.

officers selected represented only one-fifth of the Admiralty Staff billets.⁴¹

Tirpitz had a marked effect on the development of the Akademie at Kiel and was instrumental in the introduction there of naval history, strategy, political science and national economics courses.⁴² Tirpitz believed he succeeded in shaping the Akademie into a post-graduate school for line officers,⁴³ perhaps as an attempt to counter his impression that the general overall training of the German navy of the 1880's was geared too rigidly toward its objectives of competence and discipline.⁴⁴

As can be seen from a review of the previously outlined programmes of training, there was a distinct bias toward the tactical and technical side of the German naval officer's education. This was no less true in Hipper's case.⁴⁵ Hipper missed the longest and most advanced formal post-commissioning training course

⁴¹ Gemzell, op. cit., p. 41, n.16. Gemzell cites the Nachlass Keyserlink which contains a typescript biography of Admiral Büchsel whom Hubatsch regards as the best of the pre-war Admiralty Staff Chiefs. See Hubatsch, op.cit., pp. 190-140. The percentages cited here come from that MSS. See BA/MA N161/9.

⁴² Grand-Admiral Von Tirpitz, My Memoirs, (London, 1919), p. 22.

⁴³ Ibid. See also Eric Raeder, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴⁴ Tirpitz, op. cit., loc. cit.

⁴⁵ Personalakten Hipper, op. cit., 'Kommandos am Lande,' 'Kommandos an Bord.'

available in the Imperial Navy. His total training before commissioning was 46.5 months and in the balance of his career, he received only 14.5 months of formal training beyond this.

Any analysis of the formation of Hipper's professional character must reflect his career experience as well as formal training and social origins. A small catalogue of his professional experience gained prior to his promotion to flag rank on 27 January 1912, follows:⁴⁶

<u>Type of Assignment</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Duration</u>
Division Officer (Ashore). . . . .	.Apr 1885-Oct 1885 .	7 months
	Jan 1886-Mar 1887 .	15 months
Company Officer (Ashore). . . . .	.Oct 1892-Jan 1893 .	4 months
Watch Officer. . . . .	.Mar 1887-Oct 1890 .	43 months
	Oct 1894-Sept 1895 .	11 months
Torpedo Officer. . . . .	.Oct 1891-Oct 1892 .	12 months
Commanding Officer, TBD's . . . . .	.Feb 1893-Oct 1894 .	6 months
Senior Officer, TBD's . . . . .	.Sept 1895-Sept 1898 .	36 months
	Oct 1902-Sept 1905 .	35 months
	Oct 1908-Sept 1911 .	35 months
Navigation Officer . . . . .	.Oct 1898-Oct 1902 .	36 months
C.O. (Small Cruisers). . . . .	.Apr 1903-Jun 1903 .	3 months
	Apr 1906-Aug 1906 .	5 months
C.O. (Large Cruisers). . . . .	.Sept 1906-Sept 1908 .	24 months
	Oct 1911-Jan 1912 .	4 months

⁴⁶ BA/MA Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., loc. cit.

Hipper began his active naval service on 24 April 1885 as a division officer drilling recruits of the First Naval Battalion at Kiel, a seven-month assignment. In October he began a 12-week post-commissioning course for naval executive officers which he successfully completed 16 December 1885. After a period of leave, Hipper was assigned to the Second Seaman's Artillery Division, Coastal Defense Artillery, on 4 January 1886 as a division officer. He remained in this assignment until 3 March 1887 and the next day was formally assigned as watch officer in the Friedrich Karl.⁴⁷

Watch officer was a qualification level assigned by the Naval Cabinet upon recommendation of commanding officers; the term also designated the one who kept the watch. Individual commanders, however, could appoint naval executive officers to such watch officer duties as the situation demanded, with confirmation usually following at a later date from Berlin.⁴⁸ In attaining the qualification of watch officer, Hipper had achieved what Admiral Reinhard Scheer later characterized as 'the ideal of every young German executive officer in the era before the German torpedoboat service came of

⁴⁷ S.M.S. Friedrich Karl, central battery ironclad, 5971 tons displacement, armament 2 21 cm. (8.2-inch) and 14 21 cm. guns, 5 torpedo tubes, 13 knot speed, sail/steam propulsion, 33 officers, 488 men.

⁴⁸ M.O.D., N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy CB1182(C) 'The Internal Administration of Ships,' p. 8.

age.⁴⁹ Scheer described the duties of a watch officer as 'primarily shiphandling, in watches of four hours each ...the sharpest vigilance was required, especially when in company with other ships.'⁵⁰ Hipper's experience as a watch officer included 12 assignments in 10 ships which sailed the Baltic, North Sea, Atlantic and Mediterranean waters.

In retrospect, his two most significant periods as watch officer were his Mediterranean service and his later duty on the battleship Wörth.⁵¹ The former period included Hipper's service on S.M.S. Stein,⁵² Stosch,⁵³ Wacht,⁵⁴ and Friedrich der Grosse⁵⁵ and draws attention to the fact that Hipper gained cumulative sea experience, command responsibility and geographical exposure. This is in marked contrast to the narrow, parochial officer corps portrayed by

⁴⁹ Admiral Reinhard Scheer, Vom Segelschiffe zum U-Boot, (Leipzig, 1925), p. 107.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 227.

⁵¹ S.M.S. Wörth, pre-dreadnought battleship, 10,300 tons displacement, armament 6 28 cm. (11-inch) and 8 10 cm. (4.1-inch) guns, 6 torpedo tubes, 16 knot speed, steam propulsion, 38 officers, 534 men.

⁵² S.M.S. Stein, armoured corvette, 2994 tons displacement, armament 12 15 cm. (5.9-inch) guns, sail/steam propulsion, 13 knot speed, 13 officers, 386 men.

⁵³ S.M.S. Stosch, sister ship to S.M.S. Stein above.

⁵⁴ S.M.S. Wacht, dispatch boat, 1240 tons displacement, armament 3 10.5 cm. (4.2-inch) guns, 3 torpedo tubes, 19 knot speed, steam propulsion, 7 officers, 134 men.

⁵⁵ S.M.S. Friedrich der Grosse, central battery turret ironclad, 5971 tons displacement, armament 4 26 cm. (10.2-inch), 2 17 cm. (6.7-inch) guns, 5 torpedo tubes, 14 knot speed, sail/steam propulsion, 46 officers, 454 men.

Lothar Persius⁵⁶ as cited in recent works⁵⁷ on the Imperial Navy, notably those of Daniel Horn and Holger Herwig. Rather, Hipper satisfied the stipulation enunciated by Tirpitz regarding qualification of would-be admirals that 'the higher naval officer must have spent part of his life in the great world.'⁵⁸ Further, the varied nature of the Mediterranean Squadron in which Hipper served was significant professionally. S.M.S. Stein and Stosch were corvettes with mixed sail and steam propulsion and a relatively obsolete armament while S.M.S. Friedrich der Grosse was a modern central battery turret ironclad. Most important from the viewpoint of experience, however, was his service in the dispatch boat, S.M.S. Wacht because of his increased responsibility, which from a sheer statistical standpoint, allowed him more opportunity to handle her. Also, she was regarded as a technologically advanced vessel and Hipper was part of her first officer complement. Hipper's fitness reports during his Mediterranean service describe him as a competent watch officer who made no mistakes worthy of note-- a fine ship handler and navigator.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Capt. Lothar Persius (ret), correspondent for the Berliner Tageblatt on naval affairs from 1912 onwards; a noted critic and gadfly of the Tirpitz regime and author of several books on the Imperial Navy.

⁵⁷ See Daniel Horn, The German Naval Mutinies of World War I, (Rutgers, 1969), p. 10, n27; Holger Herwig, op. cit., p. 64, n4. See also A.J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol ii, p. 19, for a similar assertion.

⁵⁸ Tirpitz, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵⁹ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., Qualificationsberichte, 1887-1890.

Hipper's tour between 1894 and 1895 as senior watch officer, S.M.S. Wörth, came four years after he finished his Mediterranean service and capped his service as a watch officer. The Wörth was a key assignment for Hipper primarily because Prince Heinrich of Prussia, brother of Kaiser Wilhelm II, was captain of the ship. Prince Heinrich was the first royalty to observe Hipper closely and the first 'grand seigneur' Hipper knew well enough to emulate. Heinrich's reports on Hipper included two important recommendations. The first was that Hipper eventually should command all German torpedoboats and 18 years later-- in 1912--Hipper did. The second was that Hipper should be considered for responsible posts as a navigator and later Hipper was appointed to two such assignments. Moreover, Prince Heinrich, as personal example for Hipper, was both a grand seigneur and 'a better seaman than administrator.'⁶⁰ That Hipper affected the manner of a grand seigneur there is evidence from both his biographer, Waldeyer-Hartz,⁶¹ and Erich Raeder, his principal war-time chief of staff.⁶²

⁶⁰ P.R.O. Adm 116/940B, H.L. Heath, Naval Attache to Sir E. Goschen British Ambassador to Germany, Berlin, 6 Aug 1910, 'A General Report on Naval Affairs,' p. 1.

⁶¹ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., p. 150.

⁶² Raeder, op. cit., p. 41.

In this affectation Hipper was similar to Admiral Hugo von Pohl, Chief of the Naval Staff from 1913 to February 1915 and C-in-C of the High Seas Fleet until his death in February 1916, who modelled himself after the 'Grand seigneur Admiral Friedrich Count von Baudissin to the extent of copying the latter's external appearance and mannerisms.'⁶³ Hipper served under von Baudissin in the Wacht in 1889 and the Hohenzollern in 1899-1902. As to Prince Heinrich being a "better seaman than administrator,"⁶⁴ Hipper himself hated paperwork all his life.⁶⁴ Hipper's extensive interest in the technical side of his responsibilities⁶⁵ is well documented. He complained, for example, about all the writing involved in the semi-annual fitness reports for his captains, executive officers and leading engineers.⁶⁶ Indeed, Scheer criticized Hipper⁶⁷ for leaving

⁶³ BA-Koblenz, Logbuch Bogislav von Selchow, vol. 36, 7189, cited in Herwig, op. cit., p. 77.

⁶⁴ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp. 7-10.

⁶⁵ BA/MA Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., 31 Auszug, Qualifikationsberichte, 23 Jun 1911, Admiral von Schröder, chief of the Baltic Naval Station, to Chief of the Naval Cabinet. See also 32 Auszug, ff.

⁶⁶ BA/MA N162, Nachlass Hipper, Chapter 7, p. 36, 17 Oct 1917.

⁶⁷ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., 39 Auszug, 1 Dec 1917, Admiral Scheer, C-in-C, High Seas Fleet, to Chief of the Naval Cabinet.

too much of the administrative work to his staff. In any event, Hipper certainly developed traits similar to Prince Heinrich and is best known for his seamanship, not as an administrator. Prince Heinrich aside, the fact that S.M.S. Wörth was one of the most powerful and advanced battleships of her time was itself significant to Hipper's personal experience as a watch officer. The design of the Wörth and her three sister ships included three twin 28 cm. (11-inch) gun turrets on the centre line and light anti-torpedo armament, anticipating the dread-nought idea by more than a decade. And finally, it was during Hipper's service in Wörth that he was promoted to senior lieutenant and awarded his first decoration⁶⁸ on 29 August 1895--the Bavarian National Defence Service Medal--albeit the lowest Bavarian decoration in the Imperial German Navy List.

The next step beyond watch officer in Hipper's career was his designation as a torpedo-specialist. He trained from October 1890 to January 1891 aboard the old torpedo training ship, Blücher, at Kiel as temporary duty away from S.M.S. Mücke, a self-propelled armoured coastal defense vessel.

⁶⁸ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., Orden und Auszeichnungen.

Admiral Scheer, who had trained in the Blücher in 1888, noted many years later that the torpedo training affected his own career since he was thereafter designated a torpedo-specialist⁶⁹ and Hipper was similarly affected. He was assigned as torpedo officer of the S.M.S. Friedrich der Grosse, a capital ship, in October 1891 and to S.M.S. Beowulf⁷⁰ in April 1892 which he helped commission. As torpedo officer, he was 'responsible for the efficiency of torpedoes, torpedo armament and all that pertains to it: torpedo charges, explosives equipment, including charges and mine clearing gear, and for the administration and maintenance of torpedo stores.' He was also 'in charge of the training of the crew in torpedo work, explosives and minesweeping, and head of torpedo personnel.'⁷¹ According to Scheer, the position of torpedo officer in battleships ranked below the gunnery officer but above the watch officers.⁷²

⁶⁹ Scheer, vom Segelschiffe, op. cit., p. 107.

⁷⁰ S.M.S. Beowulf, coastal armoured ship, 3741 tons displacement, armament 3 24 cm. (9.4-inch), 10 8.8 cm. (3.4-inch) guns, 4 torpedo tubes, 14 knot speed, steam propulsion, 20 officers, 256 men.

⁷¹ M.O.D., N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy CB 1182(C), op. cit., p. 5.

⁷² Scheer, op. cit., p. 226.

Subsequently, Hipper was assigned to the Second Torpedo Unit, Wilhelmshaven in October 1892, as company commander. Between then and September 1894 Hipper had 11 assignment changes which included command of a company of recruits, further training as a torpedo officer, and command of 9 torpedo boats. But such extensive command experience did not sit well with certain senior officers such as Admiral Alexander von Monts who succeeded General von Caprivi as Chief of the Admiralty in 1888. According to Tirpitz, Inspector of Torpedoes at the time, von Monts had 'an undisguised dislike of torpedoboats, which indeed was shared by almost all the older officers of that time ...because younger officers were appointed to independent commands in the torpedo section at an age which they considered was not sufficiently ripe.'⁷³ It should be noted, however, that Tirpitz was hardly an impartial observer: he described his torpedoboat service 'among our black comrades; of the wild and daring chase' as 'the 11 best years of my life. We were bound to our incomparable crews by enthusiasm and mutual comradeship in storm and danger. We officers of the torpedo section constituted a corps within a corps, the united spirit of which was everywhere recognized, but also envied and opposed.'⁷⁴

⁷³ Tirpitz, op. cit., p. 43.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 51.

In light of the above, it is well to remember that the torpedoboat of the 1890's was by and large an uncomfortable and dangerous ship, richly deserving a reputation for "hard lying." Coal-fired vessels of at most 350 tons displacement, torpedoboats carried one or two officers and about 20 men at a choppy speed between 18 and 25 knots.⁷⁵ The crews were recruited from among North Sea fishermen, insofar as possible, and ^{were} mostly volunteers who received no extra allowance as did their American and British contemporaries.⁷⁶ Moreover, the quality of the German torpedo section was not lost on the British observer who commented that 'The torpedo service is probably having an effect on both officers and men, and this effect will be shown in the battle squadrons in a few years time. One can generally detect a torpedoboat officer, his whole manner and bearing being so different from those serving in line-of-battle ships.'⁷⁷

After an intervening tour as watch officer in Wörth already described, Hipper's next torpedo assignment was that of Commanding Officer, Second Torpedoboat Reserve Division, beginning in September 1895. Hipper's biographer

⁷⁵ See Jane's Fighting Ships, 1906-1907, pp. 252-253.

⁷⁶ M.O.D., N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy CB1182(L), 'Pay Regulations Officers and Lower Deck Ratings,' pp. 1-18.

⁷⁷ P.R.O., Adm 116/940B, Captain Heath to Ambassador Goschen, 6 Aug 1910, p. 2. See n.60 supra.

Waldeyer-Hartz, asserts that Hipper's appointment as commander of the Second Torpedo Division 'was the decisive step which led to Hipper's brilliant career.'⁷⁸

In retrospect, however, it would appear that Hipper's appointment to Prince Heinrich's ship, S.M.S. Wörth, had far more effect on Hipper's career, especially since Heinrich himself was promoted to Rear Admiral from that ship and went on to command the fleet from 1906-1909. Heinrich must have watched Hipper's progress between his Wörth assignment in 1894-95 and his later command of the armoured cruiser Friedrich Karl in 1906-08 as a captain. Heinrich wrote a special endorsement on Hipper's annual fitness report in 1907 to the effect that Hipper should be considered for the assignment of flag officer, torpedo-boats, when such a position was brought into existence.⁷⁹ As it turned out, Hipper was the first officer to hold this job.

Hipper's affinity for torpedoboat spirit was especially evident when he was a young lieutenant in command of the Second Torpedo Division. He and his captains, who were all lieutenants, were fond of appearing off-duty in similar mufti, including identical straw hats with a red 'Stander Z' embroidered on their hats' black ribbon bands. Since

⁷⁸ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., p. 60.

⁷⁹ BA/MA F 3468/PG 67613, Akten des Kaiserl. Marine Kabinetts, (Papers of the Imperial Naval Cabinet), 1.12.07, Heinrich of Prussia to Chief of the Naval Cabinet.

'Stander Z' was the German naval attack signal,⁸⁰ it would appear that Hipper observed the spirit of the torpedo service much as Tirpitz had expressed it.

For 21 months Hipper commanded 4 boats of either the reserve or the active torpedo divisions, the principal difference being the reserve boats were older. After a brief interlude to acquire advanced training in strategy and tactics on an Admiralty Staff journey aboard the yacht Grille, Hipper was appointed commander of the Second Reserve Torpedoboat Flotilla of 8 boats, a 15-month assignment. This assignment coincided with a particularly dangerous and costly period for the German torpedoboat service in peacetime, primarily because of extraordinarily bad weather: torpedoboat S-41 was lost in a severe storm in August 1895, S-46 and S-48 collided in a storm in the Jade River in March 1896 and S-48 sank, and in September 1897 S-28 was sunk in a severe storm in the Elbe estuary.⁸¹ None of these boats were under Hipper's command.

Inevitably, Hipper's performance in the torpedoboat service came to the Kaiser's attention because Wilhelm II habitually attended his fleet's manoeuvres. The Kaiser saw Hipper's torpedoboat division perform, which clearly

⁸⁰ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp.61-62.

⁸¹ Fritz E. Giese, Kleine Geschichte der deutschen Flotte, (Berlin, 1965), p. 76.

demonstrated Hipper's ship handling and navigating abilities; the 'torpedoboat attack' on the battle line was a dramatic highpoint of most of the 'Kaiser-manoeuvres.'⁸² On 1 October 1898, however, Hipper's torpedoboat service was interrupted by an appointment as navigator of the fleet flagship, S.M.S. Kurfürst Friedrich Wilhelm. The fleet commander was Vice Admiral August Thomsen, 'the father of German naval artillery.' The Kurfürst was a sister ship of the Wörth and in the Imperial Navy, the assignment of navigator in a battleship meant Hipper was third in succession to command after the captain and the executive officer.⁸³ After serving 11 months under Admiral Thomsen, Hipper was ordered to the Imperial Yacht Hohenzollern as navigator on 16 September 1899. This brought him into close contact with the highest military and political circles in Germany. The Kaiser spent much of his time aboard the Hohenzollern; in fact, more than a third of his reign.⁸⁴ Hipper had the good fortune to be aboard for the visit to England for the funeral of Queen Victoria in 1901,

⁸² BA/MA F 3391/PG 67211-67219, 67230, 67233, 67240-67243/Reels 492, 513-515, Übungsberichte Aug 1889-März 1915, (Drill Reports).

⁸³ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., Kommandos on Bord; see also Scheer, op. cit., p. 226 and M.O.D., German Navy, CB 1182(C), op. cit., p. 4.

⁸⁴ Herwig, op. cit., p. 28. See also Emil Ludwig, Wilhelm Hohenzollern, The Last of the Kaisers, (New York, 1927), pp. 88, 186, 237, 258-9, 262, 281, 322, 402, 433.

the Kaiser's meeting with the Tzar at Danzig, the American cruise in March 1902 with Prince Heinrich and the return visit to the Tzar at Reval.⁸⁵ Commander Count Baudissin was Hipper's captain in Hohenzollern and Hipper had many occasions to put his navigating skills to the test. For example, Queen Victoria's funeral necessitated a January crossing of the North Sea and Prince Heinrich's American visit a crossing of the Atlantic in mid-winter. An understanding of Hipper's problems as navigator of the Hohenzollern is perhaps best gained through Erich Raeder's words. Raeder, Hipper's principal wartime chief of staff and future C-in-C of the German navy, was navigator of the Kaiser's yacht from 1910 to 1912.

As a ship, the Hohenzollern fell far short of what an Imperial yacht would be expected to be. In construction she could almost be called a monstrosity. With abnormally high freeboard, she rolled in rough weather to a point uncomfortable even for old sailors. Her watertight integrity would not have met the safety requirements of even an ordinary passenger ship, much less an Imperial yacht. To my amazement even the navigation equipment was exceedingly antiquated; at a time when the ships of the fleet all had gyrocompasses, the Hohenzollern had only magnetic compasses aboard. Yet the captain, the navigating officer, and the watch officers were responsible for the very life of the Head of the State, not to speak of the nation's prestige.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ BA/MA F 3456-3457/PG 67548-67552/Reels 602, 564-565, Reise S.M. der Kaiser und König im Jahre 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, (Travels of His Majesty the Emperor and King).

⁸⁶ Raeder, op. cit., p. 33.

Hipper's assignment aboard the Hohenzollern brought him many medals: the Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, Fourth Class (lowest of ranking Imperial Service Orders) on 3 August 1900; the Bavarian Military Service Order, Third Class, on 17 September 1900; the Order of St. Stanislaus from the Tzar of Russia on the latter's visit to Danzig in December 1901, as a member of the officers' complement of the Hohenzollern; the Grand Duchy of Saxony's House Order of the White Falcon, First Class, on the occasion of the Grand Duke's visit aboard the yacht on 10 August 1902; the Order of the Red Eagle with swords, a higher level of the same order he received earlier, on 12 August 1902.⁸⁷ Hipper also was promoted to lieutenant commander 16 June 1901 while serving as navigator aboard the royal yacht.

Waldeyer-Hartz, Hipper's biographer, asserts that the Kaiser visited Hipper 'quite informally' when Hipper was in command of the light cruiser Leipzig which acted as escort ship for the Hohenzollern in 1906.⁸⁸ This may be true but neither the Kaiser nor Hipper recorded it, at least according to the major recent biographies or

⁸⁷ Personal Akten Hipper, Orden und Auszeichnungen, loc. cit.; see also Rangliste der Kaiserlichen Marine, (Berlin, ann.), Bezeichnung der Orden und Ehrenzeichen, p. VII ff., for 1914.

⁸⁸ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., p. 81.

analyses of that eccentric monarch.⁸⁹ Hipper and the Kaiser, however, both read the sea romances of Frederick Marryat⁹⁰ and there is a picture of the Kaiser, Hipper, and Baudissin (among the royal entourage) doing 'monkey drill' on the Hohenzollern. The picture, entitled "Early Morning on the Hohenzollern," was reproduced from the memoirs of Count Philipp Eulenburg, close friend of the Kaiser.⁹¹ The only direct intervention in Hipper's career by royal authority appears to be his assignment as commander of the Second Torpedo Unit from 1 October 1902 to 30 September 1905. This is documented in his service record.⁹² When Hipper assumed command of this unit, it was significant that he was given the light cruiser Niobe, a brand new ship,⁹³ as his flotilla leader, because the Germans were developing the tactical use of such ships in consort with torpedoboats; and it also represented his first command of what could be regarded as a truly ocean-going vessel. Hipper personally commanded the Niobe for

⁸⁹ See Ex-Kaiser Wilhelm, My Memoirs 1877-1918, (London, 1922); Balfour, op. cit.; Ludwig, op. cit.; W. Görlitz, The Kaiser and His Court, (London, 1961); Georg Alexander von Müller, Der Kaiser..., (Göttingen, 1965); Virginia S. Cowles, The Kaiser, (New York, 1963).

⁹⁰ Balfour, op. cit., p. 161.

⁹¹ Ibidem, photos pp. 260 ff.

⁹² Personalakten Hipper, op. cit., Kommandos an Bord.

⁹³ S.M.S. Niobe, light cruiser, 2963 tons displacement, armament 10.5 cm. (4.2-inch) guns, 2 torpedo tubes, 19 knot speed, steam propulsion, 14 officers, 243 men.

six months to bring her into full service but when the work was done he shifted his pennant to the ocean-going torpedoboat D8. He received two Prussian service orders while commanding the Second Torpedo Unit: the Prussian Distinguished Service Cross on 9 May 1903 and the Prussian Royal Crown Order, Third Class, while serving as the flotilla commander of the Second Torpedoboat Flotilla, on 10 September 1904, following the summer manoeuvres.⁹⁴ A drill report states that the performance of the Second Torpedo Unit '...was satisfactory in all respects...in parts, excellent...the people have set-to, working out their training with great eagerness.'⁹⁵ The report stated further that 'Lt. Cdr. Hipper has fulfilled his assignment well in every respect.'⁹⁶ On 5 April 1905 Hipper was promoted to commander.

After 35 months commanding the Second Torpedo Unit, Hipper spent six months with the staff of the commandant, North Sea Naval Station. He attended two gunnery courses for senior officers, after which he was assigned to the Scouting Service. On 20 April 1906 he assumed command of the cruiser Leipzig, larger than Niobe and serving as escort

⁹⁴ BA/MA Personal Akten Hipper, Orden und Auszeichnungen.

⁹⁵ BA/MA F 3391/PG 62228, Akten Hochseeflotte Übungsberichte, Kommando der Marinestation Nordsee (Papers of the High Sea Fleet, Drill Reports, Naval Station North Sea enclosures), II, Torpedoabteilung, 1 Aug 1904, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Ibid, Section 8.

to the Imperial yacht Hohenzollern. As captain of the Leipzig,⁹⁷ Hipper was '...an Olympian figure,'⁹⁸ as were his peers in contemporary foreign navies;⁹⁹ indeed German naval regulations describe the position of captain as follows:

The Captain is of course in all matters on board supreme, and as regards general circumstances outside the ship, it is laid down that in the absence of specific instructions he must have no hesitation in acting on his own personal responsibility in such a manner as he may deem conducive to the service of the Emperor.¹⁰⁰

Upon Leipzig's departure for the Far East, Hipper was given command of the Friedrich Karl on 30 September 1906 and subsequently the ship's gunnery was known as the best in the fleet. With Hipper as commander, she won the Kaiser's Prize for good shooting and is mentioned as an outstanding gun ship in the 1907 Manoeuvre Reports.¹⁰¹

97

S.M.S. Leipzig, light cruiser, 3816 tons displacement, armament 10 10.5 cm. (4.2-inch) guns, 2 torpedo tubes, 22 knot speed, steam propulsion, 14 officers, 274 men.

98 Herwig, op. cit., p. 70.

99 See Peter Padfield, Aim Straight A biography of Sir Percy Scott, (London, 1966), pp. 73-131; see also Peter Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy, (New York, 1972), pp. 87-89; and John D. Alden, American Steel Navy, (Annapolis, 1972), p. 256.

100 M.O.D., N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy 1182(C), op. cit., p. 3. This is a translation of the German regulations for service afloat.

101 USNA, PG 67503/Reel 1168, Reichsmarineamt, Admiral von Schröder, (Inspector of Naval Artillery) to Admiral von Tirpitz (Secretary of State for Navy), 22.Jan.1907.

The command of Friedrich Karl brought Hipper the following report from Admiral von Pohl, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces:¹⁰²

He has brought the ship to a higher degree of combat effectiveness, and the ship has won the Kaiser Prize for good shooting. One of the best captains we have in the cruisers. A good example for his officers. Recommended for battleship command and for higher independent commands.

This same year, on 6 April 1907, Hipper was promoted to captain. Friedrich Karl brought Hipper not only good fitness reports and promotion; he was also awarded, amid impressive surroundings, the Order of St. Andrew, Second Class, by Nicholas II of Russia on the occasion of the latter's meeting with Kaiser Wilhelm II. Hipper was one of Kaiser Wilhelm's 'Imperial Captains' present at the meeting of the two emperors.

The new armoured cruiser Gneisenau was commissioned 6 March 1908 with Captain Hipper in command.¹⁰³ In October he was appointed commandant of the First Torpedo Division

¹⁰² BA/MA F 3468/PG 67613, Reichsmarineamt, Akten betreffend die Hochseeflotte, 1907 Band I, (Imperial Naval Office, Papers Concerning High Sea Fleet, Reports on Performance of Captains in 1907 Manoeuvres).

¹⁰³ The particulars of Hipper's two commands were S.M.S. Friedrich Karl, armoured cruiser, 9875 tons displacement, armament 4 21 cm. (8.2-inch), 10 15 cm. (5.9-inch), 12 8.8 cm. (3.4-inch) guns, 4 torpedo tubes, 20.5 knot speed, steam propulsion, 35 officers, 551 men; S.M.S. Gneisenau, armoured cruiser, 12985 tons displacement, armament 8 21 cm. (8.2-inch), 6 15 cm. (5.9-inch), 18 8.8 cm. (3.4-inch) guns, 4 torpedo tubes, 23 knot speed, steam propulsion, 38 officers, 726 men.

at Kiel. This reorganized division consisted of recruit and replacement companies and several active and reserve flotillas of torpedoboats.¹⁰⁴ For three years Hipper guided the buildup and training of over half the torpedoboats in the German navy. Newer and larger types were introduced and the number of large torpedoboats nearly doubled between 1906 and 1912. Again, Hipper turned in another superlative performance, according to Admiral von Prittwitz, commandant of the Baltic Naval Station in 1910:¹⁰⁵

The bearing of the personnel was outstanding, especially the uniforms. The appearance in military drill, the understanding of the technical education, the knowledge and ability in communications, have improved in every respect (in the First Torpedo Division). Every part of the training plan has been carried out in exemplary fashion...

The report on Hipper himself tells much of the story behind this outstanding division. It says Hipper's 'tremendous enthusiasm for the service (grosse Dienstfreudigkeit), his knowledge of the demands of the torpedo service and his example were vital in seeing that the performance of the officers and men of the First Torpedo Division was as good as it was in the winter manoeuvres, and that the torpedo flotillas find themselves in a good

¹⁰⁴ BA/MA F 3304/PG 66714, Organisation des Torpedowesens (Organization of the Torpedo Arm), Tirpitz to the Kaiser, 26 July 1906.

¹⁰⁵ BA/MA F 3391/PG 67230/Reel 491, Akten Hochseeflotte, Übungsberichte, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, Exercise Reports), von Prittwitz to the Kaiser, 29 Apr 1910.

state of readiness.' The Kaiser underlined the words ¹⁰⁶
grosse Dienstfreudigkeit in this report.

Something of a contrast is to be found in the report sent to the Kaiser by Admiral Ludwig von Schröder, Hipper's next superior. On 23 June 1911 he forwarded his report on his command for the spring of that year and said the instruction of petty officers and officers was very good, that the wireless telegraphy proficiency had improved, especially in the last year, and that from the formal exercises it was apparent the crews were well-commanded by their officers. However, the military drill was not as good as it should be, having been neglected for tactical and technical training.¹⁰⁷ As to Hipper personally, von Schröder characterized him as 'very knowledgeable in the Torpedo Service, better technically than militarily.'¹⁰⁸

Schröder's military bent is worthy of note here. He was the admiral who earned the soubriquet, 'Lion of Flanders,' on the western front in World War I, commander of the German Naval Corps there. He also was the first man the German Naval High Command called upon to restore

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Kommando Station der Ostsee Kiel, 9. Juni 1910, an Sr. Maj. Kaiser und König Berlin, Frühjahrsbesichtigung, (Naval Station Baltic Command, Kiel, 9 June 1910, to His Majesty the Kaiser and King, Berlin, Spring Reports), Section 7.

¹⁰⁷ BA/MA F 3391/PG 67230/Reel 491, Kaiserlichen Marine Kabinett Kommando der Marine Station Ostsee Frühjahrsbericht I. Torpedodivision, Admiral v. Schröder an Kaiser Wilhelm 23 June 1911, pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 9.

order after the collapse of 1918 became evident. Events moved too swiftly for him to react in time and Schröder's orders were cancelled by the German Naval High Command. Schröder's military bent was pronounced even in 1910 and this must be taken into account in analyzing his evaluation of Hipper. It will be recalled that a most telling observation on the quality of the German torpedo service was made by the British Naval Attache to Berlin in the same year Schröder was evaluating Hipper and his command. The Attache's report included the comment that 'There is no reason to suppose that either personnel or materiel are anything but first class...'¹⁰⁹

As a commander of a torpedo division, Captain Hipper at 45 had achieved the highest assignment in the German torpedo service. His total service in the torpedo branch was 10.3 years, more experience than he had in any other part of the navy.

On 1 October 1911 Hipper was given command of the armoured cruiser Yorck¹¹⁰ and also appointed chief of staff to the Deputy Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces. The latter included battle cruisers, armoured cruisers and

¹⁰⁹ P.R.O., Adm 116/940B, op. cit., loc. cit. See notes 60 and 77.

¹¹⁰ S.M.S. Yorck, armoured cruiser, 10266 tons displacement, armament 4 21 cm. (8.12-inch), 10 15 cm. (5.9-inch), 14 8.8 cm. (3.4-inch) guns, 4 torpedo tubes, 21 knot speed, steam propulsion, 35 officers, 598 men.

light cruisers, and in time of war, all torpedoboats. Hipper remained in this assignment until 26 January 1912 when Rear Admiral Gustav von Bachmann, the Deputy Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, was made Flag Officer and Hipper moved into Bachmann's billet. The next day-- 27 January 1912--Franz Hipper was promoted to rear admiral in the Imperial German Navy. It also happened to be the Kaiser's birthday. Rear Admiral Hipper was 49 years old and had spent 31 years thus far on active naval service; but his most important years as a naval commander were yet to come.

Prologue to War

Some of the events which occurred in 1912 were to have a serious effect on the ability of Germany's naval commanders to perform in war. The first event was the passage of the fleet law which stipulated Germany was to have a fleet of 41 dreadnought battleships and 20 battle cruisers, the culmination of 14 years of legislating in this area. The naval law of 1898 provided for a total of 19 battleships and 12 armoured cruisers; the naval law of 1900 for 38 battleships and 14 heavy cruisers; the 1906 law raised the total of heavy cruisers to 20; the 1908 law provided for replacing all these ships, after a 20-year life span, with dreadnoughts.¹¹¹ Even though the 1912 law

¹¹¹ See BA/MA F 33041f1/PG 66712-14/Reels 512, 513, Flotten-gesetze (Fleet Laws) 1898-1914 for original papers. See also A. von Tirpitz, Politische Dokumente, vol. i, Der Aufbau der deutschen Weltmacht (Berlin, 1924), pp. 461ff. See also Herwig, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

added only three ships to the total numbers it gravely upset the British who felt they had to mount a strong response,¹¹² and from Hipper's point of view, the single most important decision taken by the British in 1912 was to arm the Queen Elizabeth class of ships with a 15-inch gun.¹¹³ This weapon and these ships were to nullify Hipper's feat at Jutland on the afternoon of 31 May 1916 because they reversed the tactical situation he had created in severely damaging the British battle cruiser fleet; the Queen Elizabeths severely mauled Hipper's force later that day and by dark, it was Hipper, not Beatty, who had to escape.

Another event of 1912, the slowing of the German naval building programme, was to haunt Hipper. This was caused by many factors¹¹⁴ including Army demands and German domestic politics which dictated that no expenditure should overburden the tax structure of the empire lest it cost the titled and wealthy classes their privileged position.

112 A.J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol. i, 1904-1914: The Road to War, (London, 1961), pp. 275-276. See also Oscar Parkes, British Battleships, (London, 1970), pp. 558-559.

113 Parkes, op. cit., pp. 560-561. See also Marder, op. cit., pp. 414-415.

114 V.R. Berghahn, Germany and the Approach of War 1914, (London, 1973), pp. 114-115, 126-127. See also Berghahn, Der Tirpitz Plan, (Düsseldorf, 1972), pp. 380 ff.

Further, the German government wished to exert influence in the Mediterranean and the Kaiser, without informing the Fleet Command, ordered the dispatch of a dreadnought, the Goeben,¹¹⁵ and the new light cruiser, S.M.S. Breslau, as a permanent squadron.¹¹⁶ Their loss to the Scouting Forces of the High Seas Fleet meant it would be 1915 before anything approaching parity with the British battle cruiser fleet would be possible.¹¹⁷ Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff, C-in-C, High Seas Fleet, characterized the relative strength of the German scouting forces as being 'hopeless' until 1914.¹¹⁸ S.M.S. Blücher, one of the most modern ships at the time in the scouting forces, was transferred from her front-line duties to gunnery training with the intent that she would contribute more in the long run to the fleet's battle readiness. Simultaneously, the scouting forces were reduced from five ships to four.

¹¹⁵ S.M.S. Goeben, dreadnought battle cruiser, 25,400 tons displacement, armament 10 28 cm. (11-inch), 12 15 cm. (5.9-inch) 12 8.8 cm. (4.2-inch) guns, 4 torpedo tubes, 28 knot speed, steam turbine, coal and oil propulsion, 43 officers, 1010 men.

¹¹⁶ BA/MA F 3439/PG 67447/Reel 636, Mittelmeerdivision, (Mediterranean Division), Admiral von Heeringen, Chief of the Admiralty Staff, to Admiral von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet, 2 Nov 1912, via Admiral von Tirpitz, Secretary of State for Navy, forwarding an order.

¹¹⁷ A. von Tirpitz, Politische Dokumente, vol.ii, Deutsche Ohnmachtspolitik im Weltkrieg, (Berlin, 1926), pp. 662-665.

¹¹⁸ BA/MA F 33031f/PG 66709/Reel 511, Organization des Seestreitkräfte, (Organization of Naval Forces), Holtzendorff to Tirpitz 14 Jan 1911; see also Tirpitz to Holtzendorff 1 Feb 1911 and 1 Mar 1911.

As Deputy Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Hipper's primary tactical work was command of the torpedoboats assigned to the High Seas Fleet; he was also responsible for administration and sometimes command of the four light cruisers which constituted the Second Scouting Group. In 1912 the numerical weakness of the German torpedo service vis a vis the English was criticized by Vice Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, chief of the First Battle Squadron, in a letter to Admiral von Tirpitz. Tirpitz's response was an unsupported assertion that the German boats were superior for 'technical reasons.'¹¹⁹ Tirpitz was moved to discuss the torpedoboat question seven years later in his Memoirs. He blamed any significant faults on lack of funds and defended the relatively small size of the German craft, asserting that in 1909-1910 the fleet and the torpedo inspectorate had asked for smaller boats.¹²⁰ However, it should be noted that Hipper commanded the First Torpedo Division from 1908-1911 and when he read what Tirpitz had written in his Memoirs, he commented:

¹¹⁹ BA/MA F 3304/PG 66714/Reel 513, Organization des Torpedowesens (Organization of the Torpedo Branch), Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl to Tirpitz 28 Nov 1912 and Tirpitz to von Ingenohl ff.

¹²⁰ Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., pp. 568-570.

'At the beginning of the war our torpedoboats did not have the firepower that the enemy's destroyers possessed. In this respect his assertions are very misleading.'¹²¹ Hipper's comment is borne out by a comparison of the statistics on armament on a class-by-class basis: the German destroyers were smaller and less well-armed than their British adversaries.¹²² Further, Tirpitz had consistently starved the torpedo branch of the necessary torpedoes, such that they were 40 per cent under inventory before the war.¹²³ The battle fleet had higher priority. Hipper did the best he could as indicated from the following report from his immediate superior, Rear Admiral Gustav von Bachmann:¹²⁴

Special report about unusual improvements in ships' performance. 5.May.1912. He (Hipper) has succeeded in preparation and motivation in his duties as deputy admiral of the scouting ships--insofar as it is possible to make a judgement at this time--in discharging his duties with interest and enthusiasm and has demonstrated remarkable abilities. He has also proved he can stand up to the rigors of duty afloat.

¹²¹ Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv, (hereinafter NS/SA), Dep 18 A 132, Nachlass Admiral Adolph von Trotha, Hipper to Trotha, 24 December 1919.

¹²² Jane's Fighting Ships 1914 (London, 1914), pp. 78, 79-92 for British destroyers and torpedoboats; see pp. 143, 144-148 for German torpedoboats.

¹²³ BA/MA F 3304, op. cit., Admiral von Ingenohl to Admiral von Tirpitz, 28 November 1912, n. 119 supra.

¹²⁴ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., 31 Auszug, 15.5.12.

Bachmann's observation was endorsed by Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff, Fleet C-in-C under whom Hipper was serving as Deputy Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, and Flag Officer, Torpedoboats. Holtzendorff praised the 'improvements shown in military bearing and smartness,'¹²⁵ of Hipper's command in the spring, 1912 manoeuvres. After the exercises, the fleet made a 'spring cruise' during which drills were carried out utilizing light cruisers as command ships for the torpedoboats of the High Seas Fleet. S.M.S. Cöln, Hipper's flagship, was one of the command ships involved, and Holtzendorff praised his performance in his report to the Kaiser. The Fleet C-in-C recommended the use of cruisers as command ships for the torpedoboats¹²⁶ be continued and the Kaiser accepted this recommendation. Holtzendorff also recommended that proposed changes in the manning system of the High Seas Fleet not be adopted.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ BA/MA F 3391/PG 67241-42/Reel 515, Übungsberichte, Hochseeflotte März 1912 (Drill Reports, High Seas Fleet, March 1912), Holtzendorff to the Kaiser, 30 March 1912.

¹²⁶ BA/MA F 3391/PG 67243/Reel 516, Übungsberichte, Hochseeflotte, Frühjahrsreise, (Drill Reports, High Seas Fleet, Spring Cruise), von Holtzendorff to the Kaiser, 4 July 1912.

¹²⁷ BA/MA F 728/PG 67715/Reel 511, Reichsmarineamt, Allgemeines Marinedepartement, Akten Hochseeflotte (Imperial Navy Office, General Naval Department, Papers of the High Seas Fleet), High Seas Fleet Command, Kiel, 9 July 1912.

The manning of ships of the Imperial Navy and the simultaneous maintenance of a high state of readiness was an old and serious problem. In 1907 Prince Heinrich, shortly after taking over command of the High Seas Fleet, complained to Tirpitz that the personnel turnover was too high and submitted that all officer training should be aimed at increasing fleet proficiency.¹²⁸ The British also recognized the problem in the German fleet and according to A. J. Marder, believed that 'A great defect in the German Navy was its system of short service, although the men were hard-working and well-drilled and trained.'¹²⁹ Marder was quoting the British Naval Attache's letter to Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador, 13 October 1913. And Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, Fleet C-in-C 1913-1915, criticized the German manning system, albeit in retrospect, when he observed that the Imperial Navy's sailors were inferior to the long-term volunteers of the British Navy.¹³⁰

In June 1912, the Kaiser proposed to alleviate some of the problems posed by the short service system in the battle fleet by introducing, on an experimental basis, the manning system used in the torpedoboats for many years.

¹²⁸ BA/MA F 728/PG 65719/Reel 1314, Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Prince Heinrich to Tirpitz, 5 June 1907.

¹²⁹ Marder, op. cit., vol. i, p.413.

¹³⁰ BA/MA F 3809a/PG 62374, Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, Überlegungen, Begründungen, und Erläuterungen zum Verhalten der Hochseeflotte im ersten Kriegshalbjahr, Jan 1918, (Considerations, Rationale, and Explanation of the 'Holding Back' of the High Seas Fleet in the First Six Months of the War), p. 4.

This was a system whereby the torpedoboats received completely new crews every three years--officers, petty officers, and recruits. The Kaiser proposed this system supplant the method wherein one-third of the ratings serving in every active ship in the High Seas Fleet were replaced annually by recruits. As resident fleet expert on torpedoboats, Hipper was required to give a detailed analysis and deposition on the Kaiser's proposal.¹³¹ The document which resulted appears to be one of his lengthiest efforts in pre-war official writing, other than his reports on manoeuvres. Holtzendorff, the Fleet commander, asked Hipper and other senior officers to examine most carefully the impact on operational readiness of a fleet-wide manning system based on that used in the torpedoboats.¹³² Other officers asked for their opinions included Admirals Bachmann, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, von Ingenohl, Chief of the First Battle Squadron, and von Schröder, Chief of the Second Battle Squadron, and several captains in these commands. In a display of rare unanimity, all of these officers wrote that the proposed change in the manning system was incompatible with a high level of fleet readiness.

¹³¹ BA/MA F 728/PG 67715/Reel 511, op. cit., 2. Admiral der Aufklärungsschiffe No. 655, Kiel 20.Juni.1912, (Deputy Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Kiel 20 June 1912), pp. 11-18. For another copy see BA/MA F 3303if/PG 66709.

¹³² Ibid, Kommando der Hochseeflotte, 6100A3, 9 July 1912, p. 1.

But even though these officers thought the proposal would not work, Holtzendorff ordered some of them to try it out. Two battleships of the First Squadron under Admiral von Ingenohl were selected to attempt the experiment moored¹³³ and Admiral Bachmann was told to carry it out underway in the scouting forces in at least one battle cruiser and one new light cruiser during the fall manoeuvres.¹³⁴ Both Bachmann and Ingenohl objected strenuously and were supported by Hipper and their respective captains. As it turned out, only the dockside experiment was carried out and it proved the operational readiness of the fleet would be gravely affected should the Kaiser's suggestion be adopted, a result which Hipper's objective analysis several weeks previous had predicted. As a junior admiral, Hipper's initial foray into fleet policy-making foreshadowed his wartime efforts to debunk unsound strategical and tactical plans,¹³⁵ and his careful analysis of the German Navy's 1912 manning system policy is reflected in his extensive conclusions:

¹³³ Ibid, loc. cit.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ F 145/PG 75106/Reel 655, Kreuzerkrieg mit grosser Kreuzer Nov 1914 (Cruiser War with Battle Cruisers), B.d.A., Wilhelms-haven, 12 Nov 1914, Gg. 1227 A 1. See also USNA, PG 77733d/Reel 1659, Kriegserfahrungen des Kommandos der Hochseestreitkräfte, 1 Apr-30 Jun 1915, (War Experiences of High Seas Fleet Commands), B.d.A., Jade, Gg. 1232 A 1, pp. 6-26. See also BA/MA F 3820/PG 62447, O Sache, Kriegsaufgabe 19, Aufgabe der I.B.d.A., K.d.H., K.T.B. der B.d.A., (Operations Orders, War Plan 19, I.B.d.A. annex, High Seas Fleet Command, War Diary of the B.d.A.), Jade, 29 Oct 1914.

In summation, it is my view that the one-third system now used throughout the fleet is correct in principle, though improvements are desirable. On the other hand, I strongly believe that the introduction of the three-year system would be a dangerous course. The introduction of this system would reduce the battle readiness of a squadron and thereby the whole fleet would suffer. I know the three-year system personally from my command in the torpedo division and am of the opinion that it is impossible to maintain the present level of readiness in our flotillas. The fact that nothing has changed up to this date is due to the high cost of materials and wide acceptance on the part of everyone that the three-year (torpedoboat) system is a fact of life.

I believe that an experiment with this (three year) system in the fleet would be of extremely dubious value. The low battle readiness of the particular ship which is in its first year would decrease the battle readiness of the whole fleet. We have had this experience (in the torpedoboats) every time we go on manoeuvres in the autumn; the new ships bring down the performance of the whole fleet.

I believe an experiment with this system, as stated and planned above, in the scouting ships this autumn to be extremely inadvisable. The greatest weakness in the High Seas Fleet, as far as they can figure, is the battle readiness of the scouting ships. A further weakening of this formation by implementing the above suggestion, i.e., that one of the battle cruisers (Moltke) and two or three of the light cruisers be manned completely with recruits, plus the possibility that another capital ship may be lost (to front-line service) through the necessity of dockyard repairs, would be an especially dangerous move and gravely reduce the battle readiness of the formation.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ BA/MA F 728/PG 67715/Reel 511, op. cit., 2. Admiral der Aufklärungsschiffe No. 655, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

There are some other points, other than his conclusion, in Hipper's analysis which deserve mention. He observed that in the event the proposed three-year system was implemented, the entire officer and petty officer complement of the ships involved would have to be changed in addition to the ratings. He said this would have an adverse effect on morale¹³⁷ because the officers and petty officers would not know their men and everything would have to be learned from scratch. Hipper also was concerned about the possible damage to expensive battle fleet materiel by a cadre unfamiliar with their new ship and by inexperienced recruits. He also noted it would be well-nigh impossible for the officers and petty officers of ships filled with recruits to make their ships battle-ready in the space of a few months. In essence, the ships which would be involved in the prospective manning system would be treated as newly-commissioned ships without the benefit of the traditional method the Imperial Navy used to build morale and ship spirit. This method involved the older vessel being tied up astern of the new ship and the old ship paid off; the crew would then march 'man and mouse'

¹³⁷ BA/MA F 728/PG 67715/Reel 511, op. cit., 2. Admiral der Aufklärungsschiffe, p. 15.

to the new ship,¹³⁸ the intent being to carry on the 'tradition' which the crew of the old ship had built together. For example, the new battle cruiser Seydlitz was manned eventually with the old crew of the armoured cruiser Yorck and according to Hipper, 'the Seydlitz has a fine spirit and high morale, having carried over the spirit of the old Yorck crew.'¹³⁹ The Seydlitz crew was still holding reunions as late as 1972.¹⁴⁰

On the other hand, the new dreadnought Prinzregent Luitpold was manned by personnel drawn from all over the fleet when she was commissioned on 19 August 1913 and even after 10 months of training together, the ship's

¹³⁸ BA/MA F 728/PG 65713/Reel 1401, Reichsmarineamt, Allgemeines Marinedepartement, Akten betreffend die Hochseeflotte, Indienstellungen der Schiffe (Imperial Navy Office, General Naval Department, Papers Concerning the High Seas Fleet, Commissioning of Ships) Nov 1908-Jan 1911. The policy is clearly illustrated here.

¹³⁹ USNA, PG 67250/Reel 494, Akten des Kaiserlichen Marine-Kabinetts betreffend Übungsberichte der Hochseeflotte. Der Befehlshaber der Aufklärungsschiffe Pl66 A 1, Hauptgefechtsbesichtigungen der Aufklärungsschiffe, Wilhelmshaven, (Papers of the Imperial Naval Cabinet Concerning Drill Reports of the High Seas Fleet. The Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Pl66 A 1, Main Battle Inspection of the Scouting Ships), 7 Apr 1914, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁰ F. Ruge, Warship Profile 14, S.M.S. Seydlitz/Grosser Kreuzer 1913-1919, (Windsor, 1972), p. 48.

esprit de corps had not been established. This situation was obvious to British visitors during Kiel Week in June 1914 who labelled her a bad ship.¹⁴¹ This characteristic manifested itself when she was the first ship 'on which mutiny erupted' on 2 August 1917.¹⁴² Her history is an illustration of the problems which Hipper predicted could result from adoption of a manning system devoid of tradition. However, the manning of the Prinz-regent and many of the ships of the Third Battle Squadron was complicated by the lack of old ships whose crews could be utilized, and hence was a matter of necessity. It will be recalled that in 1912, a year before the Prinz-regent was commissioned, the Kaiser had suggested a test be made of a manning system comparable to that employed for this new dreadnought even though fleet opinion, including Hipper, was dead set against it. However, by 1913 the strains of a naval buildup forced the adoption of this type of manning system.¹⁴³ Hipper's professional contribution in analyzing the German manning system in 1912 thus was overtaken by the necessity of unprecedented fleet expansion.

Nonetheless, his career was enhanced with two more

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P.R.O., Adm 137/1013, Intelligence Information Obtained at Kiel, 5 5 Sept 1914, C.O., H.M.S. King George V to Flag Officer, Second Battle Squadron.

142 Herwig, op. cit., p. 194.

143 See n.138 supra.

service decorations: the Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, with Swords, Second Class, on 19 September 1912, and the Silver Bavarian Military Service Medal, the last decoration Hipper received before the war.

As Hipper entered his second year as a scouting force admiral, Admiral Bachmann was moved to comment that Hipper 'was a great support to me when we worked together in the scouting service,' even though Hipper's forte was torpedoboats. But Bachmann also was concerned about the possible adverse effect on Hipper's health because of the intense pace Hipper maintained to achieve the highest possible performance from his ships.¹⁴⁴ This is the first mention of health problems in Hipper's annual fitness reports and might be dismissed were it not for the wartime medical leaves which followed.¹⁴⁵

Nonetheless, Hipper was appointed Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, on 1 October 1913 when Admiral Bachmann was made Chief of the Baltic Station. Erich Raeder gives an interesting initial assessment of his new chief:

¹⁴⁴ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., 35 Auszug (Entry) 16 May 1913.

¹⁴⁵ See Appendix I, Chronology of Naval Service.

But if we had to lose Admiral Bachmann, we could not have had a replacement more to our liking than Rear Admiral Hipper...Our new commander was an energetic and impulsive individual, with quick perception and a keen 'seaman's eye,' but unlike his predecessor, he had risen exclusively through performance in the fleet, having distinguished himself successively with the torpedo boats, then as captain of the armoured cruiser Gneisenau, and then as commander of the light cruiser and torpedoboat forces. Sheer theory was not his forte; he hated paper work, and up to this time had never had a staff larger than a chief of staff and a flag lieutenant. Now, as commander of all the scouting forces, he had to put up with the reports and suggestions of a large staff.¹⁴⁶

The phrase, 'risen exclusively through performance in the fleet,' was aptly chosen; a substantial part of Bachmann's career was spent in the Imperial Naval Office.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, Hipper characterized himself as a 'common ordinary front commander.'¹⁴⁸

To understand the further development of Hipper's career as Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, it is necessary to review the historical evolution of the billet of the Command of the German Home Fleet Scouting Forces.

¹⁴⁶ Raeder, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁴⁷ BA/MA Sammelheft (Compendium) die deutschen Admirale, Gustav von Bachmann, 1860-1943.

¹⁴⁸ NS/SA, Dep 18 A132, op. cit., Hipper to Trotha, loc. cit., supra.

In 1898, when Admiral von Tirpitz succeeded in changing the German navy's mission from support of overseas cruiser squadrons to a main battle fleet concept, the role of the scouting force was not neglected. Tirpitz said: 'A battle fleet does not only consist of battleships, but requires today, as it did in earlier times, scouting ships and watch ships...which underway, at anchor or in battle are to defend the fleet through advanced fast cruisers against torpedo attack...England has two cruisers for every battleship, France 1-2; we must have 6 large and 16 small light cruisers to escort our fleet of 17 battleships. Small cruisers by themselves are not enough as they would have to go up against the more heavily armed (cruising) ships of the enemy; we must have ships which can fight the enemy.',¹⁴⁹

As this force of scouting ships came into being, from 1898 onwards, it was composed of armoured cruisers, light cruisers and torpedoboats. Later, battle cruisers were added because the Germans were forced to follow the British lead in this area.¹⁵⁰ The evolution of the billet of Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, began with a

¹⁴⁹ BA/MA F 33041f1/PG 66712/Reel 512, Akten Kaiserliches Marine Kabinetts (sic) betreffend das Flottengesetz (Papers of the Imperial Naval Cabinet Concerning Fleet Law), 1898, p.9.

¹⁵⁰ USNA, PG 66087/Reel 1501, R.M.A., Zentralabteilung Akten Sitzungs Protokolle, (Imperial Naval Office Central Bureau, Papers on Plenary Conferences), Jan 1905-Apr 1909, Conference on Large Cruisers 19 Sept 1906.

request¹⁵¹ for a definition of the function and responsibilities of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces billet from Admiral Gustav von Senden-Bibran, Chief of the Naval Cabinet. The question was decided by Imperial Order with the resulting memorandum signed by both the Kaiser and Tirpitz. The memorandum stated that 'The B.d.A. (Befehlshaber die Aufklärungsschiffe) shall have the disciplinary powers and command authority which applies to the Flag Officer, Second in Command of a Battle Squadron.'¹⁵² Six months later, the Kaiser followed this with another memorandum that the B.d.A. 'be given the same disciplinary powers and leave-granting authority as a commander of an independent cruiser squadron.'¹⁵³ The latter was a Gerichtsherr, or the sworn legal authority who was a representative of the Kaiser in legal matters. There were two classes of sworn legal authorities: the lower class dealt with minor offenses of those below the rank of officer; the upper class dealt with serious offenses, and an independent cruiser squadron commander was a higher sworn legal authority. Generally, the designation was limited to admirals in

¹⁵¹ BA/MA F 33031f/PG 66707/Reel 510, Organisation der Seestreitkräfte, (Organization of Naval Forces), von Senden-Bibran to Tirpitz, Berlin, 23 Dec 1902.

¹⁵² Ibid, op. cit., Kaiser Wilhelm II and Tirpitz to Senden-Bibran, Berlin, Neues Palais 30 Dec 1902.

¹⁵³ Ibid, op. cit., Kaiser Wilhelm II and Senden-Bibran to Tirpitz aboard the yacht Hohenzollern, 29 June 1903.

command. The leave-granting authority was another power granted in the Kaiser's name.¹⁵⁴ According to the Imperial Military Code (Reichsmilitär-gesetz), all discipline including upper and lower legal authority and leave-granting authority, was in the hands of the Emperor. But in practice this authority was delegated to various officers in command.

Another aspect of the B.d.A. billet was that the actual number of ships assigned to scouting force duties varied from year to year with the average being about four or five armoured cruisers and a like number of light cruisers until about 1911 when the light cruisers in service for manoeuvres nearly doubled in number. After the war broke out, all new construction was assigned to the home squadrons instead of being sent abroad to relieve or to reinforce the cruiser squadron.¹⁵⁵

There is one other aspect of the authority of the B.d.A. which deserves mention: it was not among the service assignments (Immediatstellung) from which direct access to the Kaiser was possible.¹⁵⁶ This was because

¹⁵⁴ M.O.D., N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy CB 1182 (M), 'Discipline,' pp. 3-5.

¹⁵⁵ USNA, PG 65537/Reel 1401, Reichsmarineamt, Allgemeines Marindepartement Akten betreffend des Kreuzergeschwaders Bd 2 Dec 1908-1915 (Imperial Naval Office, General Naval Department, Papers Concerning the Cruiser Squadron, vol. 2); see also F 728, op. cit., PG 65714, Feb 1911-Apr 1912, for additional information on cruiser assignments and shortages.

¹⁵⁶ Herwig, op. cit., p. 26 n.3, pp. 38, 181, 236.

the Commander-in-Chief, High Seas Fleet, had the access for the forces afloat, an access retained until August 1918 when Admiral Reinhard Scheer reorganized the naval high command and subordinated all the commands in the navy to himself.

It was Scheer who had added to the organizational strength of the B.d.A. in 1912 when, as head of the General Naval Department of the Imperial Naval Office, he suggested a third admiral be assigned to the scouting forces.¹⁵⁷ He made this suggestion because he felt the commanders were overburdened in peace and would be vulnerable in war; the German scouting forces were in a period of accelerated growth. Tirpitz rejected Scheer's idea, labelling it¹⁵⁸ overstaffing, but the Kaiser ordered the third admiral¹⁵⁹ to be added.

Another organizational difficulty was resolved when the Fleet C-in-C, Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl,¹⁶⁰ decided to assign the B.d.A. to Wilhelmshaven as a home port, an action concurred in by Tirpitz.¹⁶¹ It was felt

¹⁵⁷ BA/MA F 33031f/PG 66709; Organisation der Seestreitkräfte, op. cit., Admiral Reinhard Scheer, Director, General Naval Department, Imperial Naval Office, to Admiral Tirpitz, 9 Sept 1912.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, loc. cit., Tirpitz to Scheer, 23 Sept 1912.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, Kaiser Wilhelm to Tirpitz, 15 Dec 1912.

¹⁶⁰ BA/MA F 33041f, op. cit., PG 66710, von Ingenohl to Tirpitz, Kiel, 21 Apr 1913.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, loc. cit., Admiral von Krosigk by direction of Tirpitz to von Ingenohl, 23 Apr 1913.

the strategic situation vis a vis England warranted such a move. More than that, Ingenohl believed it was desirable to develop 'a tight personal bond' between the B.d.A. and his captains so that the captains would be able to handle their cruisers in a manner to the B.d.A.'s liking even if contact was broken by the exigencies of a situation. This bond, Ingenohl said, could be achieved only if the whole command belonged to one harbour where they could hold frequent conferences and communicate easily among themselves.¹⁶² In his concurrence with Ingenohl's switch of the B.d.A.'s home port from Kiel to Wilhelmshaven, Admiral Tirpitz also addressed the organizational problem of the role of the Commander, Torpedoboats (Führer der Torpedoboote), a position Hipper had held in the 1912 fall manoeuvres. At that time Hipper had been granted full authority¹⁶³ equivalent to a permanent command assignment but Tirpitz felt this temporary arrangement was inappropriate. On 23 April 1913 Tirpitz wrote:

The B.d.A. constitutes a service assignment which carries with it the authority of both upper and lower discipline as well as the leave-granting authority over commands which come under his organizational control; the Commander of Torpedoboats is a tactical commander, a flag officer of part of the scouting ships, whose authority exists only in a tactical sense, if he himself is operating with the High Seas Fleet.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² See von Ingenohl to Tirpitz, n.160 supra.

¹⁶³ BA/MA F 33041f/PG 66709, op.cit., K.d.H. 9496A3, 2.10.1912

¹⁶⁴ See Tirpitz to von Ingenohl, n.161 supra.

This definition of the B.d.A.'s authority did not undergo much change while Hipper was in the assignment from 1913-1918 although in February 1914 Hipper was given higher disciplinary authority over all fleet officers below the rank of lieutenant commander. The Fleet C-in-C was assigned disciplinary authority over all officers above the rank of lieutenant.¹⁶⁵ By May 1917 many of the junior officers for whom Hipper was the ultimate fleet disciplinary authority were serving in U-boats and he requested¹⁶⁶ he be relieved of the disciplinary power he had over them. This request was granted and the authority transferred to Flag Officer, U-boats.

As Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, from 1913-1918, Hipper was a commander who possessed complete administrative powers and concomitant tactical command authority. Certain battle squadron-level commanders were authorized to command the High Seas Fleet in tactical situations, according to notations on their

¹⁶⁵ BA/MA F 33031f/PG 66711, op. cit., Ingenohl to Hipper, 13 Feb 1914. See also Ingenohl to von Müller, loc. cit., 9 Feb 1914.

¹⁶⁶ USNA, PG 66539/Reel 1028, Admiralstab der Marine, Befehle an andere Behörden, (Admiralty Staff of the Navy, Orders to Other Commands), Gg. Besprechung im RMA, (Most Secret Conference in the Imperial Naval Office), 29 May 1917, p. 72/2.

fitness reports and Hipper was so authorized.¹⁶⁷ And as Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Hipper was in an assignment considered a step toward command of the High Seas Fleet.¹⁶⁸

His final tactical work before the outbreak of World War I involved defining the mission of the battle cruiser in the German fleet. Under Hipper the German battle cruiser forces would assume a key role in naval tactics and strategy. The ships represented an unprecedented combination of speed, firepower, size, and relatively heavy armour; the only other nation having a battle cruiser force at this time was England. Hipper became Germany's battle cruiser commander in October 1913, relieving Admiral Bachmann who had initiated the 'battle cruiser charge' during the 1912 fall manoeuvres as a cover for the withdrawal of the German fleet from a possible envelopment.¹⁶⁹ The idea was basically sound though

¹⁶⁷ BA/MA F 3468/PG 67613, Auszüge aus Qualificationsberichten über Flaggoffiziere, Dez 1915-Dez 1917, (Excerpts from Fitness Reports on Flag Officers, Dec 1915-Dec 1917), p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ P.R.O., Adm 137/4839, D.N.I. to First Lord, Memo on German Naval Officer Personnel Policies, 22/8/12; Rangliste der Kaiserlichen Marine (Berlin, ann.), 1907-1914, 1916, 1918, entries for Admirals Prince Heinrich, Holtzendorff, Ingenohl, Pohl, Scheer and Hipper. See also BA/MA F 3303/PG 66710, Akten Kaiserl. Marine Kabinetts, (Papers of the Imperial Naval Cabinet), Tirpitz to Müller 23 Apr 1913 for billet's import.

¹⁶⁹ BA/MA F 728/PG 65725/Reel 1143, Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Schlussbericht über die taktische Tätigkeit der Hochseeflotte im Übungsjahr 1912, (Final Report on Fleet in Exercise Year 1912). See Battle Cruiser Lessons, pp. 21-22.

dangerous and Hipper refined the tactic by practicing it several times before it was actually used successfully at Jutland four years later. Thus, it was hardly 'brilliant' extrication on the part of Scheer, as Marder says.¹⁷¹

But the 'battle cruiser charge' was not the only element of mission which the Scouting Forces worked on under Hipper; they also rehearsed a 'battle cruiser breakthrough' to ascertain the strength and disposition of the enemy fleet by smashing through the destroyer, light cruiser and battle cruiser screens. Hipper noted in his private account of the May 1914 manoeuvres that the objective of the battle cruisers had been attained when the way to the 'enemy's' main battle fleet was opened¹⁷² and the formal report for the manoeuvres confirms this.¹⁷³ In the May 1914 manoeuvres the exercise concerned with the 'breakthrough' was repeated at Hipper's insistence, an unusual occurrence.

¹⁷⁰ See PG 65726/Reel 1247, op. cit., Ran an den Feind (Charge the Enemy), 21 Dec 1913. See also Reports on Results of Winter Exercises, loc. cit., Mar-Aug 1914.

¹⁷¹ A.J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol. iii, Jutland and After May 1916-December 1916, (London, 1966), p. 181.

¹⁷² BA/MA, N 162, Nachlass Hipper, 1/3, 25 May 1914.

¹⁷³ BA/MA F 728/PG 65728/Reel 1247, Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Übungen während die Mairreise der Hochseeflotte 1914, (Drills During the May Voyage of the High Seas Fleet 1914), Paper no. Gg 943A1.

To carry out the 'breakthrough,' the German battle cruiser would have to fight her way through the enemy's destroyer and light cruiser screens. Even if the attacking battle cruisers had their own light cruiser and torpedoboat escort, they would still be exposed to underwater attack in the first encounter. Further, if the German battle cruisers managed to break through the screens of the enemy battle cruiser force, Hipper's command would still come under the fire of heavy guns, against which it was ill-protected,¹⁷⁴ especially in the event of a lengthy battle. As a defense in such a situation, speed, supposedly the battle cruiser's forte, was all but useless because both sides possessed it in nearly equal degree. The German ships also had a serious organizational defect for close heavy combat: their gun crews tended to keep the doors between magazines open and too much ammunition was stored for ready use in the gun-houses.¹⁷⁵ The British suffered from similar problems and the even more serious difficulty of unstable propellant.

¹⁷⁴ USNA, PG 66087-66088/Reel 1501, Reichsmarineamt, Zentral-Abteilung, Akten Sitzungs-Protokolle, Bd, 3-4, (Imperial Naval Office, Central Division, Papers Concerning Plenary Conferences, vols. 3 and 4). See especially S.M.S. Seydlitz 9 June 1908, for comment re inferiority of battle cruiser protection to that of battleships, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Ruge, op. cit., p. 35.

Another danger of the 'breakthrough' technique was the possibility of a torpedo engagement between the opposing battle cruisers. Finally, should the 'breakthrough' be attained, and the German ships ascertain the strength and disposition of the enemy battle fleet, they would be exposed to huge volumes of heavy gunfire after having already endured prolonged combat and probably damage from the enemy's light forces. In short, the mission of the battle cruiser in German fleet strategy and tactics was difficult and dangerous. Specifically, the 'charge the enemy' aspect of the mission was only to be used in a desperate situation and was likely to result in serious damage to the battle cruiser force. Preservation of the main fleet was uppermost in the minds of the German strategists. Like 'charge the enemy,' the use of the 'battle cruiser breakthrough' was a course without alternative to the German fleet commander of World War I who had battle cruisers under his flag and was faced with an enemy fleet. It was an imperative tactic because the other methods of reconnaissance, notably aircraft, zeppelins, and U-boats, were all fraught with technical difficulties which would plague them for most of the war. All lacked secure and reliable communications; the U-boat could see little

at night,¹⁷⁶ and the other two methods of reconnaissance¹⁷⁷ were extremely vulnerable to adverse weather conditions.

If the strategical role these ships played indeed determined the degree of responsibility which Hipper had to shoulder in war, what sort of risks could he afford to take? To answer this critical question it is necessary to establish the consequences to both sides should they lose their battle cruiser forces. Churchill said of the First Scouting Group, Hipper's command: 'To have this tremendous prize--the German battle cruiser squadron--whose loss would fatally mutilate the whole German navy and could never be repaired, actually within our claws, and to have the event turn on a veil of mist, was a wracking ordeal.'¹⁷⁸ Is Churchill's view more rhetoric than strategy? Corbett defined maritime strategy as 'the principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor and ...naval strategy is but that part

¹⁷⁶ PG 77734/Reel 1130, Hochseeflotte, Akten Kriegserfahrungen der Hochseestreitkräfte, B.d.A. Gg. 7 Juli 1915 (High Seas Fleet, Papers Concerning War Lessons and Experiences of the High Seas Fighting Ships, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Most Secret, 7 July 1915), Hipper to von Pohl, p. 9.

¹⁷⁷ Douglas Robinson, The Zeppelin in Combat, (Henley-on-Thames, 1971), p. 116. See also USNA, PG 76965-76967/Reels 1043, 1044, Admiralstab der Marine Akta betr. Luftkrieg, (Admiralty Staff of the Navy, Papers Concerning Air Warfare), Jan 1913-Aug 1918, 3 vols.

¹⁷⁸ A.J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol. ii, The War Years: To the Eve of Jutland 1914-1916 (London, 1965), p. 138.

of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the land forces.'¹⁷⁹ He further stated 'The paramount concern, then, of maritime strategy is to determine the mutual relations of your army and navy in a plan of war.'¹⁸⁰ This relationship had been decided by the Germans at the beginning of the war: the navy was to hold the North Sea/Baltic front and the army the other two fronts.¹⁸¹ This was a 'fleet in being' type of naval strategy, unwanted by the German fleet and its succeeding commanders. But they recognized this strategy as the only viable course because of their numerical inferiority to the British.¹⁸² With the introduction of the unrestricted submarine warfare campaign in 1917, the mission of the High Seas Fleet was modified to support the U-boats insofar as access to the open oceans was required. In

¹⁷⁹ Sir Julian Corbett, Some Principles of Maritime Strategy, (Annapolis, 1972), p. 13.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁸¹ Reinhard Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, (London, 1920), pp. 18-19.

¹⁸² BA/MA F 3809a/PG 62374, op. cit., Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, pp. 1-3. See also Admiral Hugo von Pohl, Aus Aufzeichnungen und Briefen während der Kriegszeit, (Berlin, 1920), pp. 37, 117. See also BA/MA F 4061/PG 64808/Reel 347, Kr. Op. Nordsee 61 Seeschlacht vor dem Skagerrak 31.5.16.--1.6.16., (War Operation North Sea 61, Sea Battle in the Skagerrak), Scheer to the Kaiser, After Action Report on Jutland Battle, 4 July 1916, pp. 36-37.

neither case was the German fleet to seek a decisive battle. The mission of strategical defence which fell to the German fleet would not have been disastrously affected had Hipper's force been lost because his force was not the substance of German naval strength; the substance was the Fleet's three squadrons of battleships. However, if Hipper and his four or five battle cruisers had been lost, it would have been difficult for the Germans to undertake a naval offensive against a fleet so equipped. Tactically, the Germans would also have been gravely short of information, a disengagement would have been much more difficult, lost personnel¹⁸³ would be irreplaceable, and German Fleet morale would have been gravely affected. Also, Churchill was correct in asserting Germany would not be able to replace the materiel lost.¹⁸⁴

To continue the hypothesis, if the High Seas Fleet's three squadrons were substantially intact, albeit without Hipper's force, a British assault on the North Sea front

¹⁸³ USNA, PG 76531/Reel 983, Admiralstab der Marine, Befehle an andere Behörden, (Admiralty Staff, Orders to Other Commands), Pohl, Fleet C-in-C, to Bachmann, Admiralty Staff Chief, 16 Feb 1915; Neuindienststellung der Schiffe, (Commissioning of Ships) 20 Feb 1915. These documents indicate the Germans could not man all their ships, much less absorb losses.

¹⁸⁴ BA/MA F 3428/PG 67388/Reel 494, Schiffbau in der Kaiserlichen Marine, Beiheft Schiffersatz, (Imperial Navy Shipbuilding, Special Ship Design File). See Reichschancellor Bethmann Hollweg to Carl von Treutler, 27 Nov 1915. See also F. Forstmeier, Deutsche Grosskampfschiffe 1915-1918, (Munich, 1970), pp. 18-19, 57-65.

had considerably less prospects than that undertaken in the Dardanelles. The German coast was more heavily defended by mines, coastal defence ships and guns than the Dardanelles.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, the likelihood of surprise was diminished because of reasonably good intelligence on the Grand Fleet's intentions and movements¹⁸⁶ and Hipper, after the British surprise attack in the German Bight on 28 August 1914, had set up a comprehensive watch system

¹⁸⁵ A.J.Marder, op.cit., vol.ii, pp. 229-230 for Dardanelles defences (100 guns, 300 mines). See BA/MA F 33041h/PG 67715/Reel 513, Organisation der Schiffs-Artillerie des Marinewesens und Marindepots Okt 1899-Juni 1918, (Organization of the Naval Artillery Department, Naval Establishment and Naval Depots). Useful for coastal defences. See also BA/MA F 425/PG 76925-76926/Reel 942, Minenkriegführung, (Mine Warfare), 1914-1918. See also BA/MA F 421/PG 76906-76907/Reels 995, 996, Kriegsführung Nordlicher Kriegsschauplatz, (War Conduct Northern War Theatre) 10 Oct 1914-1 Apr 1919. See also Seekriegsführung den Nordseekriegsschauplatz, op. cit. PG 76903-76905 for coastal defence arrangements.

¹⁸⁶ BA/MA F 454/PG 77063-77064/Reels 1170, 1171, Admiralstab der Marine Ausgegangene Nachrichten über englische und französische Streitkräfte, (Admiralty Staff, Disseminated Intelligence on English and French Warships), Aug-Dec 1914. See also USNA, PG 76968-76969/Reel 1091, Admiralstab der Marine, Akten betr. Operationen und Befehle unsere Flotte, (Admiralty Staff, Papers Concerning Operations and Orders of our Fleet), Jan 1916-Sept 1917. See Neumünster telegrams. For Hipper's knowledge of British strength see BA/MA F 3428/PG 67388, op.cit., see paper on new ship construction since outbreak of war, dated Apr 1916. See also BA/MA F 1885/PG 93869-93872/Reel 1459, Akten B.d.A. U-boote, (Papers of the B.d.A. on U-boats) July 1916-Mar 1918. The title is misleading as this file contains mostly intelligence on various incidents, actions and British intentions as well as disposition of British naval forces and bases. The first two years of this file (Aug 1914-June 1916) are in Lützow on the bottom of the North Sea.

in his capacity as the flag officer responsible for the security of the Bight.¹⁸⁷ This watch service stationed four capital ships outside the Jade Bar at all times, and provided for frequent patrols of the inner and outer Bight by mutually supporting light forces, regular U-boat patrols, airship and aircraft reconnaissance. These last three methods were all effective instruments of reconnaissance because their state of development allowed a good performance close to base. Thus, in the event the battle cruisers were lost, their role in strategic defence could have been assumed by other forces.

On the other hand, the Royal Navy's mission--command of the sea--could not be carried out without the help of the British battle cruiser force. There were some nine dreadnoughts in this force and it represented about 25 per cent of the capital ship strength of the Grand Fleet, the principal instrument by which 'command of the sea' was exercised. The Fleet's existence prevented Germany's access to the world's oceans.¹⁸⁸ Had the strength of the

¹⁸⁷ BA/MA F 3817-3820/PG 62446-62617/Reels 106, 176, Kriegstagebuch der B.d.A., (War Diary of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces), 30 July 1914-8 Aug 1918. See succeeding Grundsätze für Sicherung der deutschen Bucht (Principles for securing the German Bight), monthly appearing Aug 1914-Aug 1918.

¹⁸⁸ Admiral Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa, The Grand Fleet 1914-1916 Its Creation, Development and Work, (London, 1919), pp. 12-14.

Grand Fleet been reduced 25 per cent, the difference between it and the High Seas Fleet would have become small enough for Germany to alter her 'fleet in being' strategy. Again, the battle cruiser fleet was essential to British naval tactics because in a fleet engagement its mission was to come between the enemy and his base, force him to action¹⁸⁹ and deny the enemy that crucial tactical knowledge of the strength and disposition of the main battle fleet until it was too late to escape.¹⁹⁰

In sum, if Hipper was willing to risk the loss of the German fleet's ability to conduct offensive operations against another fleet, he could afford more risks than his opposition. Beatty, on the other hand, could take tactical risks so long as he did not lose a greater number of ships than he sank or disabled. In point of fact, Hipper could not take many tactical risks because he had fewer ships equipped with shorter ranged and less powerful guns and slower engines. The fleet commanders decided when Hipper and Beatty would use their forces pursuant to strategic goals but the tactical decisions of Beatty and Hipper could affect their countries' naval and maritime strategy.

¹⁸⁹ Lord Chatfield, The Navy and Defence, (London, 1942), pp. 98-106, 115.

¹⁹⁰ A.J. Marder, op.cit., vol. iii, p. 77.

By the time war broke out, Hipper had reached sufficiently high rank in the German navy to be primarily responsible for solving the naval strategical and tactical problems which the German battle cruiser brought in its wake.

An understanding and evaluation of Franz Hipper, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, as he made the transition from peace to war and adapted to its exigencies, can best be found against the background of the naval environment of that period.

PART II

HIPPER AND THE NAVAL ENVIRONMENT

The first part of this work included an examination of the risks which battle cruiser commanders could afford. If the context of Hipper's situation as a battle cruiser commander is to be fully understood, however, the special circumstances under which commanders of naval surface forces in World War I operated must be established. To begin with, the relatively recent naval weapons of mine and torpedo were to force strategic and tactical parameters on commanders such as Hipper. The electronically expanded communications were to be of greater importance as an intelligence source than as a command tool. The demands of expanded logistics, including personnel, would place an almost unbearable burden on a severely rationed German fleet and economy. Shortages of food and materiel were exacerbated by the British blockade from the beginning of the war and the priority of army requirements, combined with poor naval personnel policies, aggravated the manpower shortage in the navy. Finally, the origin and nature of Hipper's materiel, resulting from factors beyond his control, were largely to dictate the strategical course he could follow.

New Naval Weapons

New naval weapons in 1914 which had the greatest effect on both strategy and tactics in the war were the torpedo, and all its carriers, and the mine. The torpedo was carried by most dreadnoughts and battleships, cruisers, and destroyers as well as by submarines. By way of background, it is worth noting that in the 1880's it had become apparent that the torpedo launched from surface craft was a threat to the battleship. The submarine was a way of overcoming the vulnerability of the surface torpedoboats to gunfire, a means of achieving critical surprise by concealment, as well as a means of coastal defence against fleet attacks. The torpedo in its 1914 version was an inexpensive weapon which could sink or cripple a capital ship with one hit. In the first World War, the torpedo was established as a major consideration in operational calculations of surface commanders.

Like the torpedo, the mine was not 100 per cent reliable but it was reliable enough to influence the strategy and tactics of both sides. It was not so much the technological novelty which distinguished naval mine use in World War I but rather the vast numbers in which

this weapon was employed for the first time: some 240,000 mines were laid worldwide. Usually, the mine was a stationary weapon though sometimes a drifting type was used which could be deployed either by surface ships or by submarines. It was inexpensive yet one mine could cripple or sink a capital ship. The following paragraphs detail the thoughts of both German and British commanders on torpedoes and mines; agreement by both major combatants on the effects of these new naval weapons is the best indication of their influence on the naval environment of World War I.

Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, the first wartime commander of the High Seas Fleet, provides some insight on the danger posed by torpedo-carrying submarines in the German Bight.¹ He relates the results of the May 1914 manoeuvres in which a certain number of U-boats assigned the role of offensive English forces achieved hits on every large ship which came within range the first day of the operation. It did not matter whether the German

¹ BA/MA, F 3809/a/PG 62374, Hochseeflotte, K.T.B. des K.d.H., Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, Überlegungen, Begründungen und Erläuterungen zum Verhalten der Hochseeflotte im ersten Kriegshalbjahr, Berlin, Jan 1918 (War Diary of the High Seas Fleet Command, Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, Rationale behind the Operations of the Fleet in the first six months of the War), pp. 7-8.

battleships were anchored inside or outside the Jade River Bar; the U-boats were even more effective in inflicting heavy losses on the battle line as it emerged into the open sea north of Heligoland. As a result of these manoeuvres, von Ingenohl was extremely reluctant to order sorties, once the war began; to him the probability of losing a great number of ships to submarine attack seemed high, should the Fleet have to undertake a forced sortie.²

There were three tactical reasons for Ingenohl's logic: first, the unfortunate necessity for the German Fleet to sortie in line ahead because of insufficient room in the channels of the Elbe and Jade rivers to do otherwise; secondly, a substantial lack of satisfactory and effective anti-submarine weapons; and thirdly, the German command's belief that there was a distinct possibility³ of mines being laid across the track of the High Seas Fleet. To some extent, the tactical problems were solved with the construction of anti-submarine net defences and the laying of defensive mine fields.⁴

² Ibid, p. 8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Raeder, My Life, op. cit., p. 47.

Strategically, the combination of geographic disadvantage and the probability of damage by underwater attack also limited any German fleet commander's options. As Marder has so aptly stated, 'In any war with Germany, Great Britain started with the crucial geographical advantage of stretching like a gigantic breakwater across the approaches to Germany.'⁵ Marder echoes the German official history of the war which says the unfavourable political constellations had resulted in a geographical situation extremely adverse to deployment of German sea-power, especially in the North Sea.⁶ Again, von Tirpitz says in his discussion of the High Seas Fleet's performance in the war at sea:⁷

The position was extraordinarily difficult for the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet. He was only to risk a fight under favourable conditions, but our unfavourable strategical position made it very difficult to recognise when such conditions were present, while we were able to learn from the wireless messages of the English that they were always informed immediately any substantial forces on our side even left the river estuaries.

⁵ Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 3.

⁶ Otto Groos, Der Krieg in der Nordsee, vol. i, Von Kriegsbeginn bis Anfang September 1914, (Berlin, 1922), p. 41.

⁷ Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 371.

Admiral Reinhard Scheer, the third commander of the High Seas Fleet during the war, outlined the effects of mines and torpedoes as he had to deal with them:⁸

Our commanders were faced with the many-sided problem which was made more difficult by the limited resources at our disposal: to avoid any chance of surprise, to prevent the safety of the Bight being endangered by mines or submarines, in such a way that the Fleet would not have the necessary freedom of movement to get out of harbour, and finally to seek out the enemy himself in the North Sea and do him as much damage as possible by guerilla operations.

The man responsible for carrying out the defence of the German Bight from the beginning of the war was Admiral Hipper. In the early days of August 1914, Hipper recognized the danger presented by mines and submarines and set out to counter it. It is a measure of the importance which these new naval weapons of mine and torpedo held for the Germans that the Germans set up their basic defence system to counter them. In daylight, the first line of watch vessels was to guard against enemy submarines, the second line against minelayers. It was not considered probable that submarines would be effective at night; therefore, at night the primary defence was against

⁸ Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, [op. cit.] p. 29.

minelayers.⁹ The problem was still reflected in Hipper's last orders in August 1918 for the security of the German Bight; he warned that 'the broad mine belt between Horn's Reef and Terschilling is only to be crossed by our heavy ships with good reason beforehand and then only with complete minesweeping before and a minesweeping escort'¹⁰ during the operation. Thus, the mine was of great importance to the Germans and as limiting to their fleet movements as to the British. Hipper himself felt very restricted by the mine, almost to the point of psychosis. His personal diary, which is the substance of his literary legacy, or Nachlass, provides much comment on mines. One of the most telling is the entry for 30 October 1914¹¹ prefatory to the 3 November bombardment of Great Yarmouth: 'The area is not exactly a fortress--but one can easily run over a mine and I don't intend to die so ingloriously.' He also comments on the loss of the armoured cruiser Yorck

⁹ BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62446, Hochseeflotte, K.T.B. der B.d.A., Kontre-Admiral Franz Hipper, Grundsätze für die Sicherung der Deutschen Bucht, 18 Aug 1914, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, War Diary of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Rear Admiral Franz Hipper, Principles for the Security of the German Bight).

¹⁰ BA/MA, F 3817a/PG 62436, Hochseeflotte, K.T.B. der B.d.A., Ganz Geheim, 28 Aug 1918, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, War Diary of the High Seas Fleet Command, Very Secret).

¹¹ BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/41, 30 Oct 1914.

by mine on 4 November 1914 saying the ship's captain obviously was careless and should receive a heavy punishment.¹² This reaction perhaps is due in part to his command of the Yorck just prior to his promotion to rear admiral. The irony was that the ship and 336 of her crew were lost when Yorck ran onto a German minefield.

Hipper's next mention of mines is in connection with the plans for the bombardment of Scarborough and Hartlepool in December 1914. His entry for 25 November says 'A damned dangerous lack of information on where the British have laid mines in that area concerns me. Also U-boats could provide a very unwelcome reception...I am writing this from the depths of depression so that those not standing in my shoes now may in future understand, in the event we should lose a significant part of the Fleet by this operation.'¹³

In this instance Hipper's misgivings proved unfounded. It was not mines but torpedoes which caused Hipper problems in the action off Hartlepool: he dealt with one of the first destroyer-against-dreadnought torpedo attacks in history. Four British destroyers attacked Hipper's three capital ships--Moltke, Seydlitz, and the armoured cruiser Blücher--and he turned toward the attack. Despite this manoeuvre,

¹² Ibid, 1/44, 4 Nov 1914.

¹³ Ibid, 1/48-49, 25 Nov 1914.

Blücher was damaged by two torpedoes, though not seriously.¹⁴
 The destroyers were driven off but the British torpedo had given the town of Hartlepool a respite and the coastal batteries time to bracket Hipper. Hipper, however, did not always turn toward torpedoes; at Jutland he turned away after facing a combination of overwhelming gunfire from the Fifth Battle Squadron and the British Battle Cruiser Fleet, and torpedoes from British destroyers.

As flag officer in charge of the defence of the German Bight and with several flotillas of minehunters in his command, Hipper recommended development of more sophisticated countermeasures to underwater attack. He had concluded, after several months of war experience, that larger, more seaworthy and speedier vessels were needed.
¹⁵
 He emphasized this in his report to the Fleet Commander of 7 July 1915 by asserting the new minehunters should be the size and speed of ocean-going torpedoboats so that the fleet would not be slowed by their advance mine defences. Also, even though he believed that his coastal mine forces were adequate for the time being, he said he would prefer vessels with shallower draft than the fishing steamers then in service. Hipper also made the point that U-boats

¹⁴ Ibid, 2/5, 16 Dec 1914.

¹⁵ USNA, PG 77733d/Reel 1654, Kriegserfahrungen, K.d.H., op. cit., Hipper to von Pohl, 7 July 1915, p. 24. See also Hipper to State Secretary of the Imperial Naval Office, G.2390A3, 15 May 1915.

which could lay mines should be developed. From mid-1915 onwards, the fleet began to receive minehunters capable of $16\frac{1}{2}$ knots speed, about 2 to 3 knots slower than that of the fleet. Shallow-draft minesweepers were built but did not enter service until 1918-1919. Most important, 10 minelaying U-boats were added to the German fleet in 1915-1916.¹⁶

In November 1916 Hipper launched a large programme to give complete net defence to the German Bight and harbours. The programme included nets placed across the exits from the various deeps in the Bight to trap submarines and also to retard the effectiveness of drifting mines.¹⁷ Though he had problems in carrying out the programme, he got the nets in place by mid-1917 and thenceforth worked his new minehunters with new trawlers and assigned permanent watch ships to each net barrage. In May 1918, however, mine damage to fleet ships on a sortie was still a problem and Hipper told Scheer, Fleet C-in-C, of a new idea to use wire-controlled speed boats in front of any force that went out. These boats were relatively cheap and could be carried by larger ships or

¹⁶ Erich Gröner, Die deutschen Kriegsschiffe, 1815-1945, vol. i, (Munich, 1966), pp. 350-351.

¹⁷ BA/MA, F 728/PG 77744/Reel 1406, Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Hipper to Scheer, 16 Nov 1916.

towed by smaller ones to the mine field's edge. Hipper was in favour of any idea 'which might prevent damage to materiel or loss of personnel.'¹⁸ The new boats were built but not in time for the war; the old battleships Wittelsbach and Lothringen were converted to carry a flotilla each of the boats¹⁹ but were not completed in time for use during the war.

As for the British, they recognized as early as 1907 'it would be suicidal to expose the armoured units of the fleet to a treacherous torpedo attack by stationing them within striking distance of enemy destroyers and submarines.'²⁰ By the eve of war in June 1914, a leading advocate of new naval weapons, Rear Admiral Sir Percy Scott, propounded in a letter to the Times that the day of the battleship was over because of submarines.²¹ However, the full impact of the torpedo and mine on fleet strategy and tactics is best seen in Admiral Sir John Jellicoe's book on the Grand Fleet. Jellicoe says that the first

¹⁸ Ibid, op. cit., Hipper to Scheer, 28 May 1918.

¹⁹ Erich Gröner, op. cit., pp. 71, 74.

²⁰ Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol. i, op. cit., p. 332.

²¹ Ibid, p. 333.

effect of the possibility of German mine and submarine activity had been to force the Grand Fleet to restrict its operational areas under normal circumstances to the northern North Sea.²² Further, he was of the opinion that this had meant a general holding back of the larger and more valuable capital ships by both sides and a 'small ship' war at the outset.²³ If the Grand Fleet wished to operate in mine-infested waters, it had to be preceded by minesweepers, effectively reducing fleet speed to 10 knots.²⁴ In 1919 Jellicoe wrote:

During the recent war two entirely new features of the greatest importance were introduced. First, the torpedo could be fired at very long range, up to 15,000 yards, either from large ships or destroyers, and at shorter range from submarines, and the mine had been developed; the invisibility of these weapons made it difficult for it to be known when they were being employed.²⁵

The restrictions which such weapons imposed on fleet movements were substantial: anti-torpedo manoeuvres were such as to give the tactical initiative to the attacker; further, a successful torpedo attack on a

²² Admiral Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa, The Grand Fleet 1914-1916: Its Creation, Development and Work, (London, 1919), p. 19.

²³ Ibid, p. 20.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 18.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 400.

line of battle could devastate a fleet because of single hits on individual ships. At the very least, vessels would be compelled to leave the line.²⁶ This did not compare at all with the brief movements necessary to derange the accuracy of gunfire. As an example of the kind of potential underwater damage torpedoes and mines posed and their effects on strategy and tactics, Churchill's exposition of the aftermath of Jutland is relevant.

Jellicoe was the only man on either side who could lose the war in an afternoon. First and foremost, last and dominating in the mind of the commander-in-chief stood the determination not to hazard the battle fleet. The risk of underwater damage by torpedo and mine, and the consequent destruction of the British battleship superiority lay heavy upon him. It far outweighed all considerations of the results on either side of gunfire. It was the main preoccupation of Admiralty thought before the war. From the opening of hostilities the spectacle of great vessels vanishing in a few moments as a result of underwater explosion constantly deepened the impression.²⁷

Beatty, Jellicoe's battle cruiser commander, backs up Churchill's assertion. At Dogger Bank Beatty gave an order to turn nearly full about to port when he 'personally observed a torpedo wake.'²⁸ This manoeuvre cost the British

²⁶ Jellicoe, op. cit., p. 401.

²⁷ Winston S. Churchill, The World Crisis, (New York, 1949), p. 612.

²⁸ P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, Report of Vice Admiral Sir David Beatty on the Action in the North Sea, 24 Jan 1915, p. 656, paragraph 18.

force time and certainly contributed to Hipper's escape. When Beatty took over as Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet in 1916, he ordered a change in the tactics of dealing with a torpedo attack. The change involved a turn toward the attack rather than a turn away.²⁹ But the limits remained: radical alterations of course were necessary to deal with torpedo attack and the Grand Fleet was limited under normal conditions to the northern North Sea.

In sum, it may be said that the overall effect of the two most important new naval weapons was a combination of limiting strategical employment of battle fleets by mine warfare and limiting tactical flexibility of capital ships in action by torpedo. Hipper, as a surface force commander, lived with these limitations.

Expanded Communications

Electronically expanded communications created a dual requirement which affected World War I surface force commanders. Hipper, and every other flag officer, had to 'exercise mature judgement on the advisability of employing radio, before contact was made,' and secondly, his 'radio organization had to be comprehensive and well-drilled to

²⁹ Rear Admiral W.S.Chalmers, The Life and Letters of David Beatty, (London, 1951), p. 280.

carry out the commander's wishes to the letter.'³⁰ At first glance, wireless telegraphy seems a tool which would appear to have 'greatly simplified the art of war in making communication possible under previously unheard of distances.'³¹ The case was not that simple. 'Radio, in particular, further complicated the exercise of strategy. More alertness and ingenuity were required of the various commanders...'³²

The first time wireless was used in a naval conflict was during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905; it enabled the Japanese Admiral Togo to impose a distant blockade off the Russian harbour of Port Arthur, safe from mines and torpedoes. A radio signal from a watch boat could bring the Japanese at anchor only 60 miles away down upon a Russian sortie in a few hours.³³ At the time, wireless was still in its infancy. By 1914, however, wireless telegraphy was accepted as a 'dangerous weapon, rightly used, dangerous to the enemy; but carelessly used much more

³⁰ H.A. Rochester, 'Some Strategical Aspects of Radio,' U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, August 1927, p. 857.

³¹ Rochester, op. cit., p. 854.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

dangerous for one's self.'³⁴

There is considerable evidence that German naval communicators were aware of these dangers. The evidence is found in reports of fleet manoeuvres carried out in the spring, summer and autumn of each year from 1907 onwards.³⁵ The reports include many enclosures which indicate several communication exercises were conducted during each manoeuvre. The final report to the Kaiser from the High Seas Fleet Commander had a specific section allocated to wireless telegraphy. The reports most relevant to this study were those for the years 1912, 1913, and 1914. In 1912 the spring manoeuvres finalized some of the lessons to be learned from naval wireless use, and Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff, Fleet C-in-C, reported to the Kaiser that 'the use of wireless had to be limited to the most urgent signals,' and that 'the enemy would make the destruction of each ship's wireless installations a primary target.' Also, 'ships knocked out of action should be silent to avoid detection; and only respond to

³⁴ USNA, Record Group 45, Papers of the United States Office of Naval Intelligence, Naval Attache's Report 19 June 1925, 'The Use of Wireless Telegraphy in the World War, More Especially from the Naval Strategical Point of View,' by N. von Koch, trans. from original in Marine Rundschau, 2/3 1925, Subject File WX-5, p. 2.

³⁵ USNA, File T1022, Reels 494, 515, 519, 1142, 1143, 1168, 1169, and 1247, Reichsmarineamt, Allgemeines Marinedepartement, Akten betreffend verschiedene Übungen, (Imperial Naval Office, General Naval Department, Papers Concerning Various Manoeuvres), 1907-1915.

interrogation by fleet command.'³⁶ Summer manoeuvres of 1912 indicated wireless telegraphy 'should be transmitted as little as possible to avoid detection by the enemy, that a whole series of emission control violations had been observed during the manoeuvres and that all ships had procedural difficulties and made mistakes while receiving and sending.'³⁷

In 1913 Hipper entered the reports for the Scouting Forces for the first time. Significantly, Hipper reported to Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, the High Seas Fleet Commander, and von Ingenohl reported to the Kaiser that 'the communications between flotillas and leading cruisers have improved in all respects.'³⁸ This was directly concerned with wireless transmission and reception and those ships which fell under Hipper's command authority as Flag

³⁶ USNA, PG 67245, Reel 494, Marine-Kabinett, Adm. Henning von Holtzendorff to Kaiser Wilhelm II, Anlagen zum Übungsberichte zur Hochseeflotten vom 4.7.12, Militärische Verwendung der Funktentelegraphie, (Naval Cabinet, Appendix to the Manoeuvre Report, High Seas Fleet, from 4 July 1912, Military Employment of Wireless Telegraphy).

³⁷ USNA, PG 67246, Reel 494, Marine-Kabinett, von Holtzendorff to Kaiser Wilhelm II, Bericht Gefechtsübung, Sommerreise, 19-20 July 1912, Funktentelegraphie, (Naval Cabinet, Report on Battle Drill No. 5, Summer Cruise, 19-20 July 1912, Wireless Telegraphy Appendix).

³⁸ USNA, PG 67247, Reel 494, Marine-Kabinett, Hipper to von Ingenohl, Bericht Gefechtsübung Hochseeflotte Mai 1914, Funktentelegraphie Anlagen, I.B.d.A., (Naval Cabinet, Battle Drill Report for High Seas Fleet, May 1914, Wireless Telegraphy Appendix, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces).

Officer, Reconnaissance Forces. However, von Ingenohl wrote in this same report that 'it must also be remembered that good communications could not always be assured between forces and flagships; there were not always enough channels available' and ... 'rapidity, accuracy, and security of transmissions were still problems.'³⁹ The growth in complexity and size of wireless telegraphy as a part of German naval warfare may be seen in the increased space devoted to the wireless section of the manoeuvre reports from 1907 to 1913; the latter was five times the length of the former. Technology, organization, and training continued to improve and by the spring of 1914 Hipper reported 'the wireless performance was generally good and the people were as competent and the equipment as well-organized as could be.'⁴⁰ Hipper's awareness of the problems and dangers posed by the use of wireless is supported by the appearance, in every fleet operation order bearing his signature, of a section concerning wireless and restricting

³⁹ Ibid, loc. cit.

⁴⁰ USNA, PG 67250, Reel 494, Marine-Kabinett, Hipper to von Ingenohl, Gefechtsbereitschafts Bericht Aufklärungsschiffe, Wilhelmshaven, 7.4.14, (Naval Cabinet, Battle Readiness Report of Scouting Ships, enclosure in 'Report on Battle Readiness Inspection of High Seas Fleet', Wilhelmshaven, dated 7 Apr 1914).

its use to an absolute minimum.⁴¹ The fact that these orders were transmitted to the fleet several times as part of larger fleet orders indicated that succeeding fleet chiefs of staff who did the transmitting were somewhat less aware of the dangers of wireless than was Hipper. Although German ships at sea were well-exercised in wireless security, the command ashore does not appear to have been rehearsed in this capacity.⁴²

In examining further the question of communications between the German High Command ashore and the Fleet Command afloat, it should be pointed out that the German Fleet Command was spared the problem of interference in its operations by higher commands basically because the German

⁴¹ Cautions may be found in BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62447, K.T.B. des B.d.A., (War Diary of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces), High Seas Fleet Plan for War Operation 19, I.B.d.A. Appendix, 2 Nov 1914. See also High Seas Fleet Plan for War Operation 20, I.B.d.A., Appendix, 14-15 Dec 1914. See also USNA, PG 64771/Reel 142, K.T.B. des K.d.H., B.d.A. Order No. 228a, Sortie to the Dogger Bank, 23 Jan 1915. See also M.O.D., N.H.B., Admiralty, Nachlass Levetzow, Seekriegsleitung, (Papers of Magnus von Levetzow, Naval High Command), Operation Order No. 19, 24 Oct 1918, Reel 50, Frames 00506-00510. See also BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/41, 27 Oct 1914, 1/46, 17 Nov 1914, and 2/10, 10 Jan 1915.

⁴² BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 2/13, 23 Jan 1915. See also David Kahn, The Codebreakers--The Story of Secret Writing, (London, 1967), pp. 270-272, and N. von Koch, *ibid*, *supra*, p.3, 'All German attacks on a larger scale were preceded by a lively wireless conversation.'

command structure⁴³ simply did not provide for this on a day-to-day basis with or without instantaneous communication. Admiral Scheer noted that 'On land the Supreme Command permanently controlled the war operations; this was not the case at sea. If the Fleet had been defeated in battle, no one would have dreamt of making the Naval Staff responsible, but only the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet.'⁴⁴ Until the establishment of the Seekriegsleitung (Supreme Naval Command) in August 1918, there was for the German navy no superior on land in a position similar to that of the British First Sea Lord.

An investigation of the German signal records⁴⁵ of the four most important sea actions of the High Seas Fleet

⁴³ Carl-Axel Gemzell, Organization, Conflict, and Innovation A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940 (Lund, 1973), pp. 43-45. See also Herwig, op. cit., pp. 26-27 and pp. 234-236. See also Walther Hubatsch, Der Admiralstab (Frankfurt/Main, 1958), pp. 83, 179.

⁴⁴ Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, op. cit., p. 325.

⁴⁵ USNA, File T1022, Reels 141, 142, Kommando der Hochseeskräfte, K.T.B., Funksprüche, 28 Aug 1914, 15-16 Dec 1914, 23-24 Jan 1915, and 31 May-1 June 1916. See also Otto Groos, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 272-289; vol. iii, pp. 250-261, and pp. 282-289.

in the North Sea up to and including Jutland shows no signals of an operational control nature to a fleet commander-in-chief from any command ashore. The Fleet Commanders-in-Chief (Ingenohl, Pohl and Scheer), once underway, were not interfered with by headquarters ashore. However, the fleet commanders would often use wireless, even while in harbour, to communicate with subordinate commands. This led to intercepts by the British, occasionally with disastrous results for the Germans. One element of the German naval command ashore addressed the problem: the Code and Cipher Section of the Imperial Naval Office headed by Rear Admiral Paul Behnke⁴⁶ said it was suspected that telephone and telegraph lines ashore were tapped and that great caution was to be exercised in transmitting wireless from ship to shore and ship to ship because it was believed the codes had been broken and traffic intercepted. The only positive action which this section could take was to change the codes, which they did. Behnke also sent a memorandum to this effect to Admiral von Pohl, chief of the Admiralty Staff, who concurred and readdressed it to the Fleet Command and

⁴⁶ USNA, PG 69201/Reel 1109, Reichsmarineamt Verschiedenes Geheim Akten Chiffrier Sachen an Admiralstabschef Berlin, 25 Nov 1914, (Imperial Naval Office, Various Secret Papers Code Section to Admiralty Staff Chief, Berlin), Rear Admiral Paul Behnke to Admiral Hugo von Pohl.

the Naval Stations North Sea and Baltic, among others.

This was as early as 25 November 1914.

But the warning on wireless security was not necessarily observed by the people responsible for transmitting wireless messages from the fleet commands to subordinate units. The most blatant violation was the transmission⁴⁷ by the Fleet Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Eckermann, to Hipper from the pre-dreadnought battleship Deutschland anchored in the Jade to Hipper's flagship Seydlitz, also anchored in the Jade. It was this signal⁴⁸ the British

⁴⁷ USNA, File T 1022, Reel 142, Der Befehlshaber der Aufklärungsschiffe Gg. 2282, Vorstoss Nach der Doggerbank, K.T.B. des K.d.H., (War Diary of the High Seas Fleet Command. B.d.A., Order no. Gg 228a, Sortie to the Dogger Bank), 23 Jan 1915. For Eckermann's role in originating the operation see Groos, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 191.

⁴⁸ Otto Groos, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 282. The German official history records the cited signal as follows: "23. I. von Deutschland an Seydlitz (Flaggschiff des B.d.A.), Uhrzeit-gruppe 2210, Eingegangen 23. I. 1915 10.27 Uhr Vm., Inhalt An B.d.A. I. u. II. A-Gr., I.F. d. T. und 2 Flotillen nach Wahl des B.d.A. aufklären Dogger-Bank. Auslaufen heute abend in der Dunkelheit, Rückkehr am folgenden Abend in der Dunkelheit. Chef der Hochseeflotte." The American Naval Intelligence translation of the official history says: "From Deutschland to Seydlitz (Flag Commander, Scouting Forces), time group 2210, time received Jan. 23 10.27 a.m. Contents: To Commander, Scouting Forces: Scouting Divisions I and II, first leader of destroyers and two flotillas, chosen by commander scouting forces, to scout the Dogger Bank. Depart this evening in darkness, returning following evening in darkness. Signed, Chief of High Seas Fleet." See also P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, 1914-1918 War Histories. This British file includes, on p. 413, a copy of the Admiralty signal cited. It reads: "From Admiralty London to Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleets. Date 23 January 1915 No. 210 Urgent. 4 German Battle Cruisers, 6 Light Cruisers and 22 Destroyers will sail this evening to scout on Dogger Bank probably return tomorrow evening..."

intercepted that resulted in the loss of the Blücher at Dogger Bank. A comparison of the original signal from Deutschland to Seydlitz with the signal from Admiralty London to Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleets, reveals an almost exact equivalent including the German time of departure, strength of force, objective, and time of return.

The normal procedure⁴⁹ of land-sea communications was to send intelligence and/or weather messages from Neumünster, Norddeich, Borkum or Heligoland Island to the forces afloat. In 1915 the old battleship Kaiser Wilhelm II was converted⁵⁰ into a station ship and outfitted with improved wireless communications for the Fleet Commander when he was not at sea. In the fall of 1915 the old cruiser Niobe was similarly converted⁵¹ for Hipper's use, at his request, because he was responsible for the security of the German Bight and desired better planning and communications facilities. Despite having this shore-based flagship, Hipper lost a large part of his official papers for the Scouting Forces, papers covering the period 1914-May 1916, when the Lützow

⁴⁹ See note 45 supra.

⁵⁰ Otto Groos, op. cit., vol. iv, p. 185.

⁵¹ Erich Raeder, My Life, op. cit., p. 81.

was sunk at Jutland.⁵² Historically speaking, this loss is a grave impediment to the study of that period of Hipper's professional life.

In effect, then, the assignment of these old ships as communications platforms was the German solution to some of the problems created by the new ability of headquarters ashore to communicate with fleet commanders afloat. Finally, it should be noted that because of the German command structure no true parallel can be made between Admiral Scheer's position vis a vis his communications with shore headquarters and Admiral Jellicoe's position vis a vis the Admiralty. The communications which Scheer received while underway at Jutland were from subordinate commands; Jellicoe received his communications from land-bound superiors.

The complete history of German communications at sea in World War I remains to be written. Almost every signal of any note has survived in the voluminous files of the Admiralty Staff. Many of the important ones have been published in the German Official History of World War I.

⁵² USNA, PG 76543, Reel 1060, Admiralstab Geschäftsordnung beim Streitkräften, 27 Juli 1918 vom 28.12.1917 Scheer an Admiralstabchef, (Admiralty Staff Business Concerning Forces Afloat Admiral Scheer to Chief of Admiralty Staff). Scheer did not wish to keep the secret archives and papers aboard his fleet flagship at sea. He cites the example of S.M.S. Lützow which sank in May 1916 taking the B.d.A. Geheim Archiv (Secret Papers) and Akten (Administrative Papers) with her.

The effect which wireless had on World War I naval operations has been outlined by Admiral Reinhard Scheer, Commander-in-Chief of the High Seas Fleet at Jutland. He termed it a useful tool for obtaining intelligence but said it created problems in regulating the 'transmission of orders and intelligence in such a way as to be certain of getting messages accurately and promptly and avoiding confusion through the operations of other stations.'⁵³ He also said that a commander was faced with the difficult position of either having his messages intercepted or not conducting operations with a widely dispersed fleet because of the risk of concomitant wireless interception.⁵⁴

Scheer reflected the general German attitude toward tactical employment of wireless when he wrote, 'Most important of all was to obtain correct information rapidly; security could be sacrificed for this, especially if the enemy had been sighted.'⁵⁵

On the other hand, Admiral Jellicoe, Commander-in-Chief of the British Grand Fleet, felt that wireless was

⁵³ Scheer, op. cit., p. 181.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 73.

⁵⁵ USNA, R.G. 45, Papers of the United States Office of Naval Intelligence, op. cit., Admiral Scheer to U. S. Naval Observer Berlin, Interview, 24 Mar 1921, 'Notes on Opinions Held by Admiral Scheer,' S.F. ZOS, f-g-I, 14060, p. 6.

one of the five factors present when the war broke out which necessitated a totally new organization at sea. Wireless, he said, dictated '...the extreme importance of reducing signalling...at sea to an absolute minimum, except in the presence of the enemy.'⁵⁶ The British, like the Germans, were forced to concentrate heavily on developing efficient signalling arrangements⁵⁷ because 'the positions of ships at sea using wireless could be determined by directional wireless.'⁵⁸

The above attitudes displayed by British and German fleet commanders resulted in the imposition of a series of restrictions on the use of wireless. In the case of the Germans, the objective was to facilitate rapid and reliable communications at the price of some security; the British intent was to avoid detection by default. The overall effect of wireless on the naval environment for both sides was to enable a naval commander with an efficient wireless intercept service to know where his enemy was without actually sighting him, providing, of course, that the intercepting party was given something to intercept. Both sides went to considerable lengths to insure that this did not happen. For example, the

⁵⁶ Jellicoe, op. cit., pp. 37-38. The other factors were the submarine, the airship and aircraft, the mine, and the effective range of gun and torpedo.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 57.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Grand Fleet wireless memoranda stated 'the closest possible supervision over the use of wireless is to be exercised by flag and commanding officers and every precaution taken against its misuse; the necessity for the greatest vigilance in this respect is to be impressed on all concerned.'⁵⁹ This remained British policy throughout the war.

German operational policy was quite similar and is reflected in the daily orders to the fleet and to the watch ships and is mentioned specifically in fleet operations orders. Hipper makes several comments on wireless in his personal writings as well as official reports already discussed. His Nachlass reveals observations of both tactical and strategical nature concerning wireless,⁶⁰ though unfortunately, there is no such general statement as Scheer or Jellicoe made. However, after passing two ships in the early morning hours of 3 November 1914 on his way to bombard Yarmouth, Hipper wrote: 'Everything depends on whether or not these two vessels have signalled our presence by wireless...the indication is that they have not, so we shall proceed.' Hipper was correct.

⁵⁹ P.R.O., Adm 137/342, Grand Fleet W/T Memoranda 1914-1918. These were orders issued on a regular and frequent basis from the Commander-in-Chief to all flag and senior officers.

⁶⁰ BA/MA, 1/42, Nachlass Hipper, 3 Nov 1914; 2/5, 15 Dec 1914; 4/35, 3 Mar 1916.

Later, on 15 December 1914 on his way to bombard Scarborough and Hartlepool, Hipper reports an intercepted enemy message which was interpreted to mean 'they (the Germans) should have left harbour by now' and he concluded correctly 'the British are setting up a reception for us.' Again, he shows concern lest a vessel he passed report his presence but none did.

Hipper commented on the strategic effect of wireless on 3 March 1916, the date on which the large German wireless intercept station was established at Neumünster. He wrote that 'For once we are lucky--the Army has done us a great service--the various cipher methods of the English have been discovered and assembled--so that we can read all of their W/T messages. To accomplish this the main wireless intercept station has been set up...with a fleet communications officer and direct connections with the fleet flagship--a tremendous advantage for our war leadership.' Though he spoke of the advantage which the 1916 developments gave the German command, it is evident from his earlier reports⁶¹ that he realized the British were just as advanced at intercept.

⁶¹ BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62447, K.T.B. der B.d.A., (War Diary of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces), see entry for 3 Nov 1914. See also BA/MA, F 4063/PG 64786, Kr. Op. Nordsee 45 Flotten-Operation gemäss Op. Befehl 28, 25-26.5.1915, (War Operation North Sea 45, Fleet Operation According to Operations Order No. 28, 25-26 May 1915), General Lessons Learned, 31 May 1915. See also BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64771/Reel 345, Kr. Op. Nordsee 35 Doggerbank-Schlacht am. 24.1.1915, (War Operation North Sea 35, Battle of the Dogger Bank on 24 Jan 1915), Special Appendix to the Battle Report.

However, in both tactical and strategical situations Hipper was more concerned with the physical vulnerability of wireless.⁶² The best indication of his application of wireless is contained in his record at Jutland: British documents show nothing was intercepted from the First Scouting Group until after contact was made.⁶³ Hipper's method of communication, eschewing wireless in favour of flaghoist and flashing light,⁶⁴ reflect a good appreciation of the tactical limits which wireless imposed.

Logistics

Logistics in the context of this work is the art of supplying and maintaining a fleet. Hipper had to contend with some exacerbated problems in logistics because the conflict in which he was a commander lasted much longer than the planners had forecast. The failure of the conflict to adhere to the paths of the materiel planners upset much of the basic war supply system designed by Admiral Tirpitz for a conflict of shorter duration. His

⁶² USNA, PG 77734/Reel 1130, Hochseeflotte Kriegsergebnisse, Erfahrungen aus der Schlacht vor dem Skagerrak auf dem Gebiete des F.T. Wesens, (High Seas Fleet War Experiences, Lessons Learned from the Battle of the Skagerrak Concerning Wireless Telegraphy Matters).

⁶³ P.R.O., Adm 137/1945, Report of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, on 'Action with the German High Sea Fleet 31 May-1 June 1916,' Battle Cruiser Fleet enclosure, p. 3. The contact was visual.

⁶⁴ H.H. Frost, The Battle of Jutland, (Annapolis, 1964), p. 193.

plan called for peacetime naval stocks of ammunition to be kept low; the money could better be invested in new construction. He also had provided, through contracts, for the rapid expansion of ammunition production in wartime at peacetime prices.⁶⁵ Besides ammunition, the whole system of maintaining a fleet requires training its personnel. The Germans, however, had 'geared their training system for a short sharp encounter which would decide the war.'⁶⁶

Further, logistics means fuel, food and other supplies for personnel. During World War I, the Germans had enough of heavy ship ammunition though it did not all perform to specification. Ships did have serious problems getting enough coal in the winter of 1917, reflecting the national shortage. They had serious problems with the quality of coal, almost from the beginning of the war. The German navy had shortages in trained technical manpower, officers and shipyard personnel. The crews themselves were plagued by insufficient food supplies.

⁶⁵ Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 38.

⁶⁶ Capt. D. Miranda, 'Organization of the Naval Schools of Germany and Austria,' Journal of the Royal United Services Institution, Jan 1913. Found also in Papers of the Office of Naval Intelligence, USNA, R.G. 38, E-g-d, 1483.

Ammunition

German ammunition quality was uneven. British after-action reports support this assertion as for example, Admiral Beatty's report on the battle of Dogger Bank: 'German shell, for incendiary effect and damage to personnel, are far inferior to ours.'⁶⁷ He also said, in a letter to Jellicoe shortly after the battle, that 'Their guns are good, calibration too close, gunlaying excellent, but the projectile no good, and I am sure we can stand a lot of it.'⁶⁸ Commodore Tyrwhitt, commanding the Fifth Light Cruiser Squadron and two flotillas of destroyers in an action against Hipper's First Scouting Group on 25 April 1916 wrote that 'After this experience I cannot say I think the 12-inch shell very formidable to an armoured ship, providing it does not hit her in a vital spot or start a big fire. Had we been hit by a 12-inch lyddite (British shell) I don't think we would have got back...'⁶⁹ There is more. Marder asserts:

⁶⁷ P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, 'Report of Vice Admiral Beatty in the Action in the North Sea,' 24 Jan 1915, enclosure 4, Remarks on the Action, p. 24.

⁶⁸ A. J. Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 165.

⁶⁹ P.R.O., Adm 137/1944, 'Action with German Battle Cruisers, 25 Apr 1916, Secret,' p. 3.

The thickest armour actually passed through was a 7½-inch tapered plate on the main belt of the Warspite. Although many of the (British) battle cruisers were hit heavily, of those that survived in one instance only did part of a shell penetrate below into the vitals of the ship...Indeed, excepting a small piece of shell which penetrated the crown of the 6-inch magazine in the Barham, no German projectile ever reached the vitals--magazines, engine-room, or boiler--of any British capital ship.⁷⁰

What of the battle cruisers which Hipper sank? The latest evidence indicates that the cause was 'the composition of their (British) cordite charges and the neglect of the various precautions built into the turret complex to prevent fire being passed down the ammunition hoists to the magazines.'⁷¹ It was not, as Tirpitz has said, the 'piercing power of our (German) heavy guns' nor the fact that their 'projectiles were designed to take effect afterward in the interior of the enemy ships'⁷² that gave birth to the false impression of German shell superiority; rather, it was a combination of unstable cordite⁷³ and lack of flash prevention policy. According to Padfield:

⁷⁰ Marder, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 172, from M.O.D., Admiralty Library, Naval Staff, Admiralty, Grand Fleet Gunnery and Torpedo Memoranda on Naval Actions, 1914-1918 (1922), p. 45. See also D.N.C. Memorandum, 'Notes on Damage to Warships, 1914-1919' (1920), also cited in Marder, loc. cit.

⁷¹ Peter Padfield, The Battleship Era, (London, 1972), p. 241.

⁷² Tirpitz, op. cit., p. 564.

⁷³ Antony Preston, Battleships of World War I, (London, 1972), p. 90.

...these (flash prevention) devices had been nullified in action by the enthusiasm of the magazine parties to feed the guns as rapidly as possible; thus the lids of the ammunition cases in the magazines were taken off before the charges were piled outside the doors, with igniters uncovered, ready for loading; and access ladders to the gunhouse which by-passed the anti-flash devices in the hoists were left open.⁷⁴

Finally, according to Sir E. Tennyson d'Eyncourt, British Director of Naval Construction, there was no evidence that 'any enemy shell had penetrated to the magazines of the British ships.'⁷⁵

Nonetheless, most German battle reports do not mention problems with ammunition.⁷⁶ For example, the battle reports of S.M.S. Lützow at Jutland are replete with notations of 'the enemy blew up' but contain not a single disparaging remark on German shell quality.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Padfield, op. cit., p. 241.

⁷⁵ Marder, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 218.

⁷⁶ BA/MA, F 3916/PG 63406, Hochseeflotte, 'Anlage zum Gefechtsbericht Gesammelte Kriegserfahrungen der Artillerie 26 Apr 1916, K.T.B., S.M.S. von der Tann, (High Seas Fleet, Appendix to After-Action Reports Concerning War Performance of Artillery, found in War Diary of S.M.S. von der Tann).

⁷⁷ BA/MA, F 3899/PG 63257, Hochseeflotte, 'Bericht über das Gefecht am 31. Mai 1916, Artilleristischer Teil, Wilhelmshaven 8 June 1916, K.T.B., S.M.S. Lützow, (High Seas Fleet, Report on the Battle of 31 May 1916, Gunnery Section).

German prisoners taken after the battles of Heligoland Bight and Dogger Bank reported the terrible effects of British shells yet did not disparage their own.⁷⁸ Nor does Hipper remark on the quality of German shell although he, too, noted the devastating effects of British shell.⁷⁹ It was apparent, however, from reports received from H.M.S. Warspite which was exposed to 30.5 cm. (12-in.) gunfire from all eight ships of the Third Battle Squadron as well as Hipper's five ships in the First Scouting Group, that many German heavy shells failed to detonate upon or after impact.⁸⁰ Even so, it appears Hipper was satisfied with his shell.

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P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, Commanding Officer, H.M.S. Liverpool to Commodore First Light Cruiser Squadron, Confidential Report, 30 Aug 1914. This report concerned the survivors of S.M.S. Mainz sunk at Heligoland. See p. 3. See also P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, Commanding Officer, H.M.S. King Edward VII to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Secret Report, 5 Feb 1915. This report concerned the interrogation of prisoners of war from S.M.S. Blücher on shell. See p. 1.

79

BA/MA, 5/22, Nachlass Hipper, 14 June 1916. See also BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62452, Hochseeflotte, Abschrift, K.T.B. des B.d.A., Abschnitt 63, Operationsbefehl Nr. 6 betr. Vorstoss ins Skagerrak, (High Seas Fleet, Copy of Section 63, War Diary, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Papers Concerning Sortie in the Skagerrak), 31 May-1 June 1916.

80 USNA, R.G. 45, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Battle of Jutland, copy of damage report to H.M.S. Warspite, Box 804, ZOS Report No. 9231.

Obviously, the Germans did not know about manufacturing defects which resulted in unexploded shells aboard British warships. Thus it is difficult to establish with certainty that the logistical support given Hipper in terms of ammunition supply was inadequate for war purposes because after Jutland there was no sustained dreadnought action in which to test the shells. But it can be determined that the Germans did not change their shell manufacturing processes during the war: according to the NIACC report on shell manufacture the Germans had not altered their heavy shell process at all during the war. Such a change would have been required had defects been discovered.⁸¹ But Tirpitz⁸² believed that German shells, even though usually a calibre smaller than those of the British, were equally effective in penetration and bursting power. This assumption, however, became less and less valid as the war progressed. By April 1918, the British were completing the process of replacing defective and ineffective shell in the powder rooms of the Grand Fleet,⁸³ a process begun after Jutland. They introduced a new type of highly efficient armour-piercing shell

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M.O.D., Admiralty, N.I.D., D.N.I. SL3480, 'Report of the Visit of the Naval Inter-Allied Commission of Control Armour Experts to Germany,' June 1920, : p. 1.

82

Tirpitz, op. cit., p. 564.

83

Marder, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 216.

'which ...certainly doubled the offensive power of the Fleet's heavy guns.'⁸⁴ There were over 12,000 of these shells in the Grand Fleet's magazines by the end of the war. When it is remembered that on any given day the British Grand Fleet's broadside, without the improved shell, was at least twice as heavy as that of the German High Seas Fleet, the loss of what the Germans thought was their technical superiority and consequently their tactical equality was made almost certain by the new British development.

This logistical weakness was important because Hipper was responsible for an operations plan in October 1918 which held as a basic assumption that German superiority in shell quality would help balance greater British numbers in ships in a decisive sea battle in the English Channel. Luckily for Hipper, this action did not take place.

A definitive technical study of the ordnance aspects of the battle of Jutland exists in an as yet unpublished manuscript by Mr. N. J. M. Cambell which shows German shells were seriously defective. Mr. Cambell has traced the path of virtually every shell fired in the battle. His work, based on both German and British official documents, indicates German ignorance of shell defects.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Marder, quoting Jellicoe, loc. cit.

⁸⁵ N.J.M. Cambell, 'The Battle of Jutland,' MSS, Quarrhurst, Binstead, Ryde, Isle of Wight. Antony Preston, author of Battleships of World War I, op. cit., concurs with Mr. Cambell's views; in a conversation with the writer 10 March 1974.

A final point on ammunition quality and supply will demonstrate the difference in amount of ammunition required by the First Scouting Group 1914-1918 as compared with five pre-dreadnought capital ships of the Deutschland class. The I.A.G., including von der Tann, Moltke, Seydlitz, Lützow and Derfflinger, required 3,720 rounds of ammunition for their main armament while five Deutschland class ships required only 1,700 rounds. Over 9,000 rounds of secondary⁸⁶ ammunition were required by each group of ships. The main armament of Hipper's battle cruisers required more than twice the number of heavy shell as a division of capital ships built before the dreadnought era. There can be little doubt that expanded ammunition requirements were part of an expanded logistics system, an unavoidable characteristic in a war where dreadnoughts fought each other for the first time.

Fuel

Another contributing factor of the new dimensions of logistics was fuel. Coal was the primary fuel for both British and German capital ships in World War I. In discussing the role of fuel in Hipper's activities as a naval commander two aspects of the problem must be considered:

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E. Gröner, Die deutschen Kriegsschiffe 1815-1945, (Munich, 1966), vol. i, pp. 77 and 114, 115, 118. For an illustration of ammunition quantity see F. Ruge, Scapa Flow 1919, (London, 1973), 2nd Photo, High Seas Fleet being Disarmed.

amount and quality. For a full war sortie of the First Scouting Group and escort, some 25,000 tons of coal and approximately 2,500 tons of oil were required.⁸⁷ It was important that the coal be of good quality because, according to Capt. Maurice von Egidy, of S.M.S. Seydlitz, bad coal 'formed so much slag that fires had to be cleaned after half the usual time, and grates burned through and fell into the ash pits.'⁸⁸ This means that bad coal was inefficient from both machinery standpoint and a tactical standpoint. It was inefficient for machinery because the engines would not develop their designed horsepower and for tactical reasons because it decreased the range and the speed. If the fire-boxes of the boilers had to be cleaned after half the usual time it also meant increased strain on the personnel involved and increased vulnerability to enemy action. There are several documented instances of Hipper's ships having poor coal. For example, as early as 17 December 1914 Capt. Max von Hahn of the battle cruiser

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Ibid, pp. 20, 25, 32-33. See also BA/MA F 728/PG 65727, Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Requirements of High Seas Fleet Fuel in War, 25 Nov 1914.

88 B. Fitzsimons, ed., Warships and Sea Battles of World War I, (New York, 1973), p. 102. Reprinted from a talk by von Egidy after Jutland.

von der Tann reported in his 'Lessons Learned' after the bombardment of Scarborough and Hartlepool that 'the inadequacy of our coal and its burning properties results in heavy smoke clouds and signals our presence.'⁸⁹ The situation with regard to coal quality had not improved by 31 May 1916 when, during the battle of Jutland, the von der Tann was not able to keep fires under all boilers after 1600 hours because of the metal grates collapsing under the stony (literally, stone-heavy) coal.⁹⁰ The stokers had to be heavily augmented from other parts of the ship. S.M.S. Derfflinger reported on 24 January 1915, more than a year before Jutland, that she could 'only make maximum speed with pure "torpedoboat coal."'⁹¹ Derfflinger had the same problems at Dogger Bank and at Jutland and so did Seydlitz.

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BA/MA, F 3916/PG 63403, Hochseeflotte, K.T.B., S.M.S. von der Tann, Allgemeine Beobachtungen, 17 Dec 1914, (High Seas Fleet, War Diary of the Battle Cruiser, von der Tann, General Observations).

⁹⁰ BA/MA, F 3916/PG 63406, Hochseeflotte, K.T.B., S.M.S. von der Tann, Gefechtsbericht zur Schlacht am 31. Mai 1916, IV (High Seas Fleet, War Diary of the Battle Cruiser, von der Tann, Battle Report on Engagement 31 May 1916).

⁹¹ BA/MA, F 3885/PG 63178, Hochseeflotte, K.T.B., S.M.S. Derfflinger, Gefechtsbericht über das Gefecht mit den I. englischen Panzerkreuzergeschwader am 24. I. 1915, (High Seas Fleet, War Diary, S.M.S. Derfflinger, Battle Report on Engagement with English First Battle Cruiser Squadron, 24 Jan 1915).

This reference to torpedoboat coal pointed up German logistic policy to supply the destroyers of their fleet with the best coal available and to give the capital ships lower priority. The fire-boxes of the boilers in the smaller ships were not as tolerant of bad fuel and could not be cleaned by their heavily taxed crews any more often than was absolutely necessary.

Having demonstrated there was a serious problem with regard to quality of capital ship coal for Hipper's command, the question may be asked whether Hipper was ever short of even bad coal for his ships. The answer may be found in the documents of the Imperial Naval Office which indicate that for December 1917, 160 tons (sic) of coal were delivered of the 14,000 tons requested.⁹² This was the coal shortage at its worse and yet it did not interfere seriously with Hipper's operations for this particular period;⁹³ the weather was too foul for major

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BA/MA, F 2047, Reichsmarineamt, Zentral Abteilung, Akten betr. Aufzeichnungen über Besprechungen bei Sr. Exzellenz dem Herres Staatssekretär, Heft 2, Mai 1917-1918, (Imperial Naval Office, Central Department, Papers Containing Notes on Conferences by the Secretary of State for Navy, vol. 2, May 1917-July 1918), as cited in F. Forstmeier and S. Breyer, Deutsche Grosskampfschiffe 1915-1918, (Munich, 1970), p. 54.

93 BA/MA, F 368-376/PG 76545-76572/Reels 1632-1653, Akten Admiralstab Abteilung "A", Dislocation der Seestreitkräfte. (Papers of the Admiralty Staff, Section A, Disposition of Naval Forces). See weekly 'Kohlen und Öl Bestände,' (Coal and Oil Stocks), 1914-1918.

sorties, the period of maximum shortages in the German economy coincided with the regularly scheduled time for capital ship refits, and the fleet stockpiles,⁹⁴ adequate to begin with, were not depleted by a high tempo of operations. In any case, there was little Hipper could do.

The effects of the British blockade were felt in Germany long before the shortage of coal at Wilhelmshaven. Gerhard Ritter says '...what really depressed the mood of the people in this third war year was the British blockade, the impact of which was growing more and more severe.'⁹⁵

Ritter continues:

During the turnip winter of 1916-17 there was widespread famine, draining the working capacity even of workers in heavy industry, and this continued until the following harvest. The drought during the summer of 1917 promised not only no improvement, but worse to come.

Among the reasons for the steady decline in morale and the rise in dissatisfaction were the shortage of raw materials, of labor for civilian needs, and of fuel; the breakdown of transport; and the fear that the war might drag on into a fourth winter.

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See Kohlen und Öl Bestände (Coal and Oil Stocks) in n. 93 supra. These stocks met 'Requirements of High Seas Fleet fuel in War,' cited in n. 87 above.

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Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter, vol. iii, The Tragedy of Statesmanship--Bethmann Hollweg as War Chancellor (1914-1917), (Miami, 1972), pp. 445-446.

The coal shortage is discussed in the Supply Service Records of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, and they indicate that because of the relatively low tempo of operations and the foul weather a crisis was avoided.

Personnel

Two types of people were required to support Hipper's ships: those who manned them and those who repaired them in the Imperial Dockyards. There is considerable evidence that the German surface fleet suffered from a lack of trained shipyard workers and a lack of competent executive officers and petty officers. The Imperial Dockyards, which performed the routine heavy maintenance for the German fleet, were hard-pressed to keep up the regular maintenance. This was because they had to handle a burgeoning submarine program, new surface ship construction, construction to replace losses, and also repair damaged ships and refit undamaged ones.⁹⁶ All of this had to be accomplished without as many people as the peacetime establishment had allowed. Many workers were called to the colors and many

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BA/MA, F 331/PG 67574-67581, Reichsmarineamt, Werft-Departement, Kriegsbereitschafts-Meldungen der Werften und Kriegsbereitschaftslisten, 1.1.1915-8.2.1917, (Imperial Naval Office, Dockyard Department, War Readiness Reports of the Dockyards and War Readiness Lists, 1 Jan 1915-8 Feb 1917).

volunteered. 'By the autumn of 1916 the most important issue at hand for the shipbuilding program was the question of workers.'⁹⁷ Additional support for the assertion that Hipper's logistical facilities were overburdened as early as the spring of 1915 comes from German Admiralty Staff documents. For example, there is a letter informing the Admiralty Staff that because of repairs to the Derfflinger and Seydlitz, the Wilhelmshaven Imperial Dockyard would have to postpone new ship construction.⁹⁸ Hipper himself comments on problems of dockyard support in writing about a Baltic operation by the Tenth Destroyer Flotilla which cost no less than seven ships lost to mines. He says: 'The loss in people is, thank God, light--there were only 1 deck officer, 5 petty officers and 6 seamen lost but the loss of valuable destroyer materiel is not easily repaired, namely because now the shipyards are suffering under a worker shortage.'⁹⁹

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F. Forstmeier and S. Breyer, op. cit., p. 39.

98

USNA, PG 76531/Reel 984, Admiralstab, Befehle an andere Behörden, Reichsmarineamt an Admiralstab, 6 Apr 1915, (Admiralty Staff, Orders and Correspondence with Other Commands, Imperial Naval Office to Admiralty Staff, 6 Apr 1915).

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BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 6/14, 15-21 Nov 1916.

But there were more serious logistical shortages troubling Hipper: the shortage of adequate executive officers of middle rank and of trained petty officers. The officer shortage in the German navy showed up early in the war¹⁰⁰ when battle squadrons were culled to provide officers for the naval corps in Flanders. This also required the decommissioning of the Sixth Battle Squadron as an effective unit and the reduction of the Fifth Battle Squadron.¹⁰¹ This policy initiated in a crisis became permanent. As newer vessels were commissioned the older ones were paid off, even when the shortage of light cruisers in the High Seas Fleet was desperate. Admiral Scheer says: 'Our weakness in cruisers with the High Seas Fleet--for the requirements of foreign stations had to be satisfied as well--was particularly deplorable.'¹⁰² Hipper carried out this policy in the autumn of 1916 when

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USNA, PG 76529/Reel 983, Admiralstab, Befehle an andere Behörden, Hochseeflotte an Admiralstab, Admiral von Ingenohl an Admiral von Pohl, 30 Okt. 1914, (Admiralty Staff, Orders and Correspondence with Other Commands, High Seas Fleet to Admiralty Staff, Admiral von Ingenohl to Admiral von Pohl, 30 Oct 1914). See also Rear Admiral Behmcke to Admiral von Pohl, passim, 'There is no way we can make up for the shortages of officers in the fleet.'

101 USNA, PG 76531/Reel 984, Admiralstab, op. cit., ibid, Admiral von Pohl to Admiral von Bachmann, 16 Feb 1915, with endorsement and concurrence of Admiral von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet.

102. Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, op. cit., p. 15.

the new S.M.S. Karlsruhe was commissioned with the crew of S.M.S. München; in November 1916 when Hipper assigned the crew of S.M.S. Stuttgart to the new Emden; in January 1917 when he assigned the crew of S.M.S. Berlin to the new Nuernberg.¹⁰³ Additionally, the commandant of the North Sea Naval Station, feeling the pinch of inadequate harbour defences, made a play for the guns of the cruiser Niobe which had been Hipper's headquarters ship for some time. The commandant wished to rearm the harbour flotillas with them. Even though Niobe was permanently moored alongside the quay at Wilhelmshaven, the fact that these guns were requested (and later supplied) is indicative of shortages.¹⁰⁴ Finally, as the war drew to a close, the Admiralty Staff was faced with continuous reports of personnel and other shortages.¹⁰⁵

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BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 6/8, 16 Oct 1916.

104

USNA, PG 76536/Reel 929, Admiralstab, Befehle an andere Behörden, Nordsee Station an AI, Admiralstab, 8.9.1916, (Admiralty Staff, Orders and Correspondence with Other Commands, North Sea Station to Senior Admiralty Staff Officers, 8 Sept 1916).

105

USNA, PG 76544/Reel 1031, Admiralstab, ibid, Fach 13, 16.Juli-30 Sept 1918, (Admiralty Staff, Orders and Correspondence with Other Commands, Vol. 13, 16 July-30 Sept 1918).

British prisoner interrogations also indicate that ships in Hipper's command suffered from shortages of trained personnel. The evidence indicates that the problem existed from the beginning of August 1914. Survivors of S.M.S. Mainz told their British captors that 'The German Navy was very short of engineer officers and engine room petty officers, and many were embarked from the merchant service at the outbreak of the war-- including most of those on the Mainz.'¹⁰⁶ Holger Herwig details the mostly social reasons for the shortage of deck, engineer and executive officers in the Imperial German Navy. In 1914 the Deck-Officer Corps, composed of skilled technicians who maintained the increasingly complex fleet, was over 2,900 strong, more than 50 per cent of the entire German naval officer corps.¹⁰⁷ Responsibilities were roughly equivalent to those of war-rant officers in the American/^{and} British navies but privileges were not.¹⁰⁸ The German navy did not treat them very well even though as Tirpitz once said, 'They were the backbone of the navy.'¹⁰⁹ For example, when Chancellor

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P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, Commodore Roger Keyes to Chief of War Staff Admiralty (V Adm Sturdee) 29 Aug 1914, p. 5.

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Holger H. Herwig, The German Naval Officer Corps, (Oxford, 1973), p. 163 n.5.

108

Herwig, op. cit., p. 140.

109

Ibid, p. 164.

Bethmann Hollweg offered commissions as engineer officers to all retired deck officers who volunteered for war service in 1914, and they volunteered almost to a man, the German navy responded by giving the commissions to other people instead: executive officer cadets, naval reserve officers and engineer-officer aspirants. The naval high command was of the opinion that 'deck officers belong to the petty officer corps; they were not deputy officers. Their origins and their education relegate them to petty officer rank.'¹¹⁰ Hipper's attitude toward the deck officer corps is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty although some insight may be gained from his actions in the following instances.

On 27 September 1914 Hipper wrote the fleet command requesting modifications for war in several old torpedo-boats. He said the living quarters in the boats would have to be changed in several ways: the executive officer cabins would have to fit twice as many people and the deck officers would also have to double up.¹¹¹ Thus it seems that in small ships Hipper demanded equal sacrifices of all.

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Ibid, p. 169.

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USNA, PG 76530/Reel 983, Admiralstab, Befehle an andere Behörden, op. cit., Hipper to Ingenohl, 27 Sept 1914.

Hipper's proposals for wartime modifications were endorsed by the Fleet Chief of Staff in the name of the Commander-in-Chief, von Ingenohl, and passed on to the Imperial Naval Office without comment, for action. The modifications were made.

On April 17, 1915 Hipper wrote the Fleet C-in-C requesting some changes in the administrative responsibilities of the officers under his command. Among the proposals was one dealing with the question of deck officer promotions. Hipper did not wish the authority for such promotions to be delegated to cruiser group commanders; he said 'it would be inadvisable to give this power to such a large number (four) of commanders because they might develop different and incompatible policies.'¹¹² Admiral von Pohl agreed.

Again, after the 1917 mutinies, Hipper recommended¹¹³ that closer relations be developed among executive officers, deck officers, and petty officers. But Scheer, Fleet C-in-C, and Rear Admiral von Trotha, Chief of Staff, ruled¹¹⁴ that this recommendation was of no interest to the fleet command.

¹¹² BA/MA, F 728/PG 65717/Reel 1313, Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Hipper to von Pohl, 17 Apr 1915.

¹¹³ BA/MA, F 871/PG 77970, Hochseeflotte, Mannschafts- und Verpflegungsausschuss-Angelegenheiten, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, Enlisted Men's and Food Concerns), Hipper to all commanders, 30 Aug 1917.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, loc. cit., Trotha to all commanders, 3 Sept 1917.

With treatment like this, it is little wonder there were shortages of deck officers or that their treatment became a public issue in Germany. Even as late as May 1918 the navy continued to reject any attempt to place deck officers on an equal status with executive officers.¹¹⁵ This policy's effects were reflected in two fleet crises during the war which Herwig¹¹⁶ describes as follows:

In the summer of 1917 deck-officers had failed to report the rebellious mood of the sailors because they felt that it was strictly a matter concerning executive officers and ratings. In fact Admiral von Hipper noted, on 10 October 1918, that his petty and deck officers had become unreliable and that some of them were inciting the sailors to disobey executive officer commands.¹ The discontent of the engineer-and-deck officers because of the refusal by the executive officer corps to grant them equal though separate officer status created a serious breakdown of communications within the naval hierarchy.

Like the deck officers, the German Naval Engineer-Officer Corps were constantly embroiled in a struggle for status, a struggle which began in the 1890's and culminated by late summer 1918 into what Herwig describes as a 'gaping chasm'¹¹⁷ between executive and engineer officers. The

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Ibid, p. 170.

116 Herwig, op. cit., p. 253, n. 1 from BA/MA, F 1685/PG 92141, S.M.S. Ostfriesland, Akten betreffend Politisches, Hipper's report from 10 Oct 1918.

117 Herwig, op. cit., p. 163.

engineers were responsible for the propulsion plants, machinery and stokers. In evaluating Hipper's attitude toward the engineers under his command a most useful tool is the annual fitness report, a confidential evaluation which measures both the man and his performance in a particular assignment. Hipper's interest in technical proficiency, as opposed to military or social status, is evident from his evaluations of the leading engineers in the battle cruisers and light cruisers in his pre-war command. For example, in his report on the Senior Engineer of the battle cruiser Seydlitz, Hipper characterized Engineer Lt. Cdr. Thomsen as 'very capable, competent, and knowledgeable, fresh and flexible--he displays great abilities in difficult situations.¹¹⁸ Hipper evaluated Engineer Commander Streipe of S.M.S. Moltke as 'being able to handle preferred jobs on the basis of his technical ability, his energy and his willingness to perform.'¹¹⁹ Of Engineer Commander Elster of the battle cruiser von der Tann¹²⁰ Hipper wrote, 'Good quality...he has been able to keep the machinery free of breakdowns in very difficult circumstances.'

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USNA, PG 67250/Reel 494, Akten Hochseeflotte, Hauptgefechtsbesichtigung Apr 1914, Urteil über den leitenden Ingenieuren No. 2, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, Main Battle Readiness Inspection Report, Apr 1914, Section on Leading Engineers, No. 2) Fitness Reports.

119 Ibid, Report No. 1, Commander Streipe.

120 Ibid, Report No. 3, Commander Elster.

On the other hand, Herwig feels Hipper represented the 'hard line approach' in his attitude toward the engineers; he relates an incident reported to Scheer on 16 February 1916 concerning Hipper's refusal to admit a flotilla engineer to the torpedoboat commander's mess. After the officer tried again, Hipper explained that he refused permission on the grounds that 'there was no necessity for this, it was undesirable from a military point of view, and the space available did not permit it,'¹²¹ and Scheer agreed with Hipper. It should be noted that the incident transpired aboard a torpedoboat, and Hipper's refusal on the 'space available' grounds had real basis in fact.¹²² Recalling that Hipper was the ultimate disciplinary authority for all officers holding the rank of lieutenant and below in the High Seas Fleet, his objection from a military point of view that discipline be consistent seems well taken, since it was a matter of regulation in the German navy. In retrospect, Hipper's refusal on the 'no necessity' grounds is the weakest of his arguments but only because the ultimate alienation of engineer officers in the closing months of the war proved the matter should have been taken more seriously.

¹²¹ Herwig, op. cit., p. 156.

¹²² F. Ruge, S.M. Torpedoboat B110/Warship Profile 27, (Windsor, 1972), p. 69.

Herwig says senior executive officers realized there would be a shortage of regular engineer officers even without a war by mid-1917 at the latest.¹²³ And following the demise of the German navy in 1918 Admiral von Trotha, who had been Fleet Chief of Staff, admitted that the officer corps, including deck, engineer, and executive officers, had been extended to its very limit and beyond by the creation of countless small units, U-boats, and casualties. The same applied to non-commissioned petty officers.¹²⁴ Wartime expansion concentrating on light ships and U-boats at the expense of heavy ships overstrained the training facilities and policies for officers and petty officers in the Imperial navy. As Trotha told Hipper, 'There appears ample proof that our armed forces were unable to withstand a long war.'¹²⁵

Besides personnel shortages, Hipper had the very serious logistical problem of providing adequate amounts of nourishing food to his men, a reflection of the very serious food

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Herwig, op. cit., p. 128.

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A. J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol. v, 1918-1919: Victory and Aftermath, (London, 1970), pp.174-175.

125

M.O.D., Admiralty, Naval Historical Branch, Nachlass von Levetzow, Rear Admiral von Trotha to Admiral von Hipper, Nov 1918, Reel 49, Frame 494 ff. See also Marder, *ibid*, p.174.

shortages prevalent in Germany. Although the executive officers may have eaten well, according to Herwig, the seamen did not.¹²⁶ The situation was so grave that the German fleet command moved to set up food complaint committees in the spring of 1917. A. J. Ryder says, 'The same undercurrent of discontent which produced the strikes in industry also led to an abortive naval mutiny in the summer of 1917. Morale in the navy was not high, mainly because of boredom induced by prolonged inaction. Specific grievances were bad food and the overbearing attitude of officers towards their men.'¹²⁷ Two American naval authors, in their examination of the German navy's problems in World War I, asserted that 'the quality of the food...was bad throughout Germany in 1917 due to a poor harvest, and the British blockade,'¹²⁸ and that 'bad food has long been one of the major grievances of sea-faring men. The German Navy was no exception. Rations were scanty, and in the last two years of the war, of the worst quality, while at the same

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Herwig, op. cit., p. 202. See also Daniel Horn, ed., The Private War of Seaman Stumpf, (London, 1969), pp. 340 ff, p. 353.

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A. J. Ryder, The German Revolution of 1918, (Cambridge, 1967), p. 101. See also David Woodward, The Collapse of Power, (London, 1973), p. 70.

128

John D. Hayes, 'Three Modern Naval Mutinies,' U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Sept 1939, p. 1287.

time the officers continued to enjoy even luxury.'¹²⁹

To a certain extent it is true that the national situation with regard to food shortages precluded any effective remedy on the part of individual flag officers like Hipper. Horn quoting Admiral Capelle says that

'...when the food shortage was at its worst von Batocki, the War Food Commissioner, ordered Admiral von Capelle, the Secretary of the Navy, to cut rations once more.

Sloughing off any possible argument, Batocki admonished Capelle to forget his peacetime conceptions of the men's food requirements.'¹³⁰ It is probably due to the general food shortage in Germany that Hipper's personal writings do not mention food as a problem, including the winters of 1916-17 and 1917-18. And even in his soul-searching comment on the collapse of the navy in 1918¹³¹ Hipper does not blame food shortages as a cause. It is also difficult to establish whether Hipper had much to do with

¹²⁹ J. B. Brown, 'Death of a Fleet,' U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, March 1941, pp. 346-347.

¹³⁰ Daniel Horn, The German Naval Mutinies of World War I, (Rutgers, 1969), p. 40.

¹³¹ BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/9, 31 Oct 1918. Hipper blamed Bolshevik agitation, war weariness and the abortive sortie of 29/30 October 1918.

the creation of the 'Food Commissions' in the spring of 1917; they appear to have been primarily the work of Admirals Scheer and Capelle.¹³² But there were other problems which came to Hipper's attention in the spring of 1917 to which he could and did propose solutions. The light forces were short of technical manpower and Hipper proposed to change the reserves' regulations so that the senior ratings could receive advanced professional training and in some cases, become petty officers or even deck officers. He felt that the regular petty and deck officers could then be freed for service in the light ships. Hipper said the new drafts of reserves for the navy were usually qualified enough to take over the duties of the senior reserve seamen and stokers. Such a change would allow the regular petty and deck officers serving in the High Seas Fleet to go to the smaller ships in larger numbers and be replaced by trained reserves. However, Hipper's suggestion was not adopted because the fleet command believed there would be too much dislocation of key personnel and readiness would be affected adversely.¹³²

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. BA/MA, F 728/PG 65727/Reel 1247, Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Der Befehlshaber der Aufklärungsschiffe, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces), Hipper to Scheer 2 Apr 1917 in reply to High Seas Fleet Command Letter of 24 Mar 1917; see Scheer to Hipper for response 4 Apr 1917.

Hipper's Materiel

About every six to nine months during the first two years of the war, the Fleet C-in-C asked the three battle squadron commanders and the flag officer, reconnaissance forces, for their evaluation of lessons learned from war experience. In the second series of such reports Hipper was asked by Admiral von Pohl for his opinion on scouting forces' materiel, what should be built for the German fleet in the future, and what changes should be made in the present materiel to correct deficiencies.

Hipper replied¹³³ that it was 'neither correct nor economical to build ships of war which were anything less than superior to those of the enemy.' He said his ships were built according to the 'principle of equality' with the enemy, not superiority. This principle, according to Hipper, allowed the enemy to set the frame of reference for any engagement and created other difficulties which resulted in his inability to dictate the course of any action because of the nature of his materiel.

He contended that the slower speed of both battle cruisers and light cruisers allowed the enemy the option

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USNA, PG 77733d/Reel 1659, Kriegserfahrungen des Kommandos der Hochseestreitkräfte, B.d.A. und I. Aufkl. Gruppe, B.d.A. Gg 1232AI, (War Experiences of the High Seas Fleet Command, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces and First Scouting Group), 7 July 1915, Hipper to von Pohl.

of engaging or escaping at will. German naval artillery was less powerful than that of the enemy and Hipper's ships were inadequately protected against the enemy's superior firepower and speed.

While Hipper's criticism stems from his role as a naval commander, the shipbuilding policy of the Imperial Navy was at the heart of his problem. This policy has been outlined quite clearly by Tirpitz who as Secretary of State for Navy was responsible for German naval construction. In describing the complex decision-making process, Tirpitz wrote:¹³⁴

'...every warship is a compromise of different desires which can never all be fulfilled at one and the same time within the limits of the finished article. A definite standard of buoyancy armour plating and speed are all wanted with a given displacement. Then there is a fight in the committees over a matter of 25 or 50 tons; and to satisfy everybody, one would soon have a 100,000 ton ship without having gained anything at all. Thus it is the strategic idea of the ship which must be firmly determined before anything else; in the nature of things, however, only the supreme naval command...can decide this.

The battle cruisers criticized by Hipper in his 1915 report had their origin as a German ship type in the decisions made during a conference¹³⁵ on 19 September 1906. At this time Tirpitz determined the 'strategical idea' of the German battle cruiser was to be an 'adequate

¹³⁴ Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 42.

¹³⁵ USNA, PG 66087/Reel 1501, Reichsmarineamt, Zentralabteilung, Akten Sitzungs-Protokolle, Bd.4. (Imperial Naval Office, Central Division, Papers Concerning Plenary Conferences, vol 4), 18 Sept 1906.

reply' to the Invincible type, the first one of which was laid down 5 February 1906 and launched 26 June 1907, the second laid down 1 March 1906 and launched 16 March 1907, and the third laid down on 2 April 1906 and launched 13 April 1907. S.M.S. von der Tann, laid down 21 March 1908 and launched 20 March 1909, was the German reply¹³⁶ to the Invincible class, not S.M.S. Blücher, as Oscar Parkes asserts.¹³⁷ Tirpitz said at the 1906 conference that the British were continuing to build large armoured cruisers and that the decision would have to be made to follow the English lead. Tirpitz and his committee had two designs for large cruisers under consideration, both with about 19,500 tons displacement and both with 8 28cm. (11-inch) guns, but with different armament layout.

The Naval Constructor von Eickstedt, however, opposed Admiral Tirpitz' concept of following the English lead for several technical reasons. von Eickstedt noted that the explosive trials for German battle cruiser protection systems were not yet complete and might require revising the design, and delay the design from three to nine months. The turbine question also was unclear, he said, and it would be three to nine months before such engines could

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USNA, PG 66087/Reel 1501, op. cit., Conference of 18 September 1906, p. 7.

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Parkes, British Battleships, op. cit., p. 492.

be built in Germany. He suggested it was incorrect to build such a large cruiser which actually would displace more than the 1906 battleships, the Nassau class dreadnoughts, especially since the question of underwater protection had not been resolved. Further, since it was known the Invincible class had only 180 mm. side armour, Eickstedt reasoned, a main armament of 21 cm. (8.2-inch) or 24 cm. (9.4-inch) would be adequate to penetrate the British ships' armour.

Rejecting these arguments, Tirpitz said there were both military and political reasons for the proposed increase in calibre and displacement. He admitted there were severe technical problems for the construction department but noted that the time was right for getting the appropriations through the Reichstag.

Admiral von Heeringen of the General Naval Department, a branch of the Imperial Naval Office, noted that the whole shipbuilding picture was in a state of flux and that 'total concept' of every ship class could only be decided within the context of other nations' programs. He said the 28 cm. (11-inch) guns were necessary so the ship could engage enemy battleships if need be. But Tirpitz replied that the battle cruiser primarily would have to fight her own kind and for this alone, the 28 cm. armament was needed.

Admiral Capelle, deputy director of the Imperial Naval Office, said that by mid-November 1906 the tests concerning underwater protection for battle cruisers would be complete. If the anti-torpedo bulkhead in the designs had to be strengthened, it might mean the 28 cm. guns would be too heavy and 24 cm. guns mounted so that the displacement could be kept around 19,000 tons. But Tirpitz was adamant in his insistence that 28 cm. guns be mounted even if the displacement had to be increased.

The discussion continued and covered the question of secondary armament; it was decided to mount 15 cm. (5.9-inch) guns in casemates, as in previous construction, rather than accept von Eickstedt's suggestion of a 17 cm. (6.7-inch) secondary armament which would have entailed abandonment of the idea of a battle cruiser design. The heavier secondary armament would have absorbed a greater proportion of the displacement so that eight heavy guns could not have been mounted.

The 1906 conference concluded with Tirpitz deciding that the final design would be a battle cruiser built according to the recommendations of the General Naval Department, armed with eight heavy guns, displacement not to exceed 19,500 tons, speed to be $23\frac{1}{2}$ to 24 knots, and cost approximately 36 million gold marks. Further, all departments

were to aid the Construction Department as needed in expediting completion of the project. S.M.S. von der Tann, followed by Moltke, Goeben, Seydlitz, Derfflinger, Lützow, and Hindenburg, were the results of this decision-making process, and were laid down under this program between 1908 and 1913. All but Goeben were part of Hipper's forces during World War I. Financial stringency and the practical difficulties of changing a design precluded much evolution in battle cruiser development especially in light of the priority of battleship construction in a continuously expanding building program. However, in 1911 it was decided¹³⁸ that a major advance in battle cruiser^{design}/would have to be attempted. This was not only because of what other countries, notably Britain and Japan, were building but also because the German ship construction effort had reached a magnitude where naval technical personnel had to concentrate their designing efforts either on battleships or battle cruisers. To do both every year was beyond the capability of the Imperial Naval Office. Tirpitz therefore decided to make such improvements in the 1911 battle cruiser design that it could be used for several succeeding years.

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USNA, PG 66088/Reel 1501, Reichsmarineamt, Zentralabteilung, Akten Sitzungs--Protokolle, Bd. 5, (Imperial Naval Office, Central Division, Papers Concerning Plenary Conferences, vol 5), 24 Sept 1910.

The ships produced under this program included S.M.S. Derfflinger, Lützow, and Hindenburg. The important differences between this class of vessels and their predecessors included a 30.5 cm. (12-inch) main armament disposed on the centre line amidships; a raised midships superstructure and a concomitantly higher secondary armament; and heavier protection. It was decided to wait until 1912 before determining whether oil should replace coal as the primary fuel for propulsion. It would be well to note that wherever limits were imposed on the capabilities of these ships, funding¹³⁹ was the primary cause; and even Tirpitz could not manage complete control over the revenues for his fleet. A secondary cause was the shallowness of the North Sea estuaries¹⁴⁰ and to a lesser extent, the size of the Kiel Canal. Tirpitz put it this way:

Further, we have to consider that our navy, compared with the great foreign navies, has always found itself in financial straits, which in view of the Chancellor's attitude toward the fleet had a most hampering effect on its development, especially during the last five years of the war...

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USNA, PG 66088/Reel 1501, op. cit., vol. 5, Plenary Conference 24 September 1910, pp. 1-3, 5, 7. See also Peter Padfield, The Great Naval Race, (New York, 1974), who discusses financial problems of the German building program at least 13 times, as does V. R. Berghahn in Germany and the Approach of War in 1914, (London, 1973).

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Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 129. Raeder, in My Life, op. cit., refers to this problem and notes it was not solved until just before World War II. See pp. 212-213.

...in view of the shortage and the fear encouraged by the Treasury and the Reichstag, of exceeding the estimates, it will be readily understood with what caution the available money was distributed, and how we were constantly forced to weigh in advance the cost of remedying even the smallest defect, which nevertheless remained a defect.¹⁴¹

There is evidence that Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg retarded the growth of the German navy during the war,¹⁴² as Tirpitz wrote, but Gerhard Ritter states that 'Tirpitz's naval programme ultimately rested on an overestimate of German resources that was characteristic of the Wilhelminian era.'¹⁴³ He adds:

He (Tirpitz) blandly ignored the fact that German finances were far from inexhaustible and that despite the fiscal reforms of 1909, simultaneous enlargement of army and navy, as planned in 1911, simply transcended German resources and was bound to throw the Reich budget into serious confusion.

Thus it appears that in the development of German battle cruiser materiel the prime consideration was funding¹⁴⁴

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Tirpitz, op. cit., pp. 562-563.

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BA/MA, F 3428/PG 67388/Reel 494, Schiffbau in der Kaiserlichen Marine, Jan 1904-Sept 1918, Beiheft Schiffersatz Okt 1915-Sept 1918, (Shipbuilding in the Imperial Navy, Special File Ship Design), Bethmann Hollweg to Geheim Rat von Treutler, civil minister to the Imperial Court, 27 Nov 1915.

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Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter, vol. ii, The European Powers and the Wilhelminian Empire, 1890-1914, (Miami, 1972), pp. 148-149.

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V. R. Berghahn, Germany and the Approach of War in 1914, op. cit., p. 127.

rather than superiority over the enemy as Hipper and other front commanders so heartily desired. That Hipper was aware of the political considerations inherent in any building program is evident from his reply of 7 July 1915 to von Pohl's question of what kind of capital ships should be built in the future. Hipper said: 'In order to answer this properly, I should have to know what was the situation, what were the government's political objectives, and what role the armed forces of the country were to have in attaining those objectives.'¹⁴⁵

Hipper also wrote that he believed large capital ships would be required to conduct overseas warfare in any future war, especially 'if we desire to bring the war into the Atlantic.' He said the threat of the U-boat could be countered by greater underwater defensive measures and higher speed in large capital ships, though it was not clear to him exactly what type of capital ship should be built. He felt Germany should refrain from further battleship construction until it was clear what the enemy was going to do; meanwhile, battle cruisers should be built. These, he said, should have heavy calibre guns carried in four turrets on the center line with the greatest possible range and secondary artillery as at present.

¹⁴⁵

USNA, PG 77733d/Reel 1659, op. cit., p. 3.

Hipper also believed there should be at least 50 per cent reserve gun tubes for each heavy gun carried. As for armour, he was in favour of increasing the protection against plunging fire by adding armour to the decks and weapons systems, both turrets and magazine-handling areas. This could be accomplished by reducing the side armour; and the citadel armour should be strengthened bow and stern to keep out the seas if necessary. Hipper also suggested a second armoured deck to protect the rudder machinery and was in favour of increased freeboard aft and completion of the watertight integrity of fore and aft spaces for the full length of the ship and to the upper deck. And he wanted a more spacious command tower, especially for the flagship, with a good view aft.

In addition to better protection for future battle cruisers, Hipper's thinking on their propulsion plants reveals a bent towards speed. He said the machinery should be able to maintain the highest continuous speed for a fully loaded ship in sustained operations. The maximum speed should be six to seven knots faster than the Derfflinger class (26 knots) and about three knots faster than any fast battleships which might be built, and it should be possible to achieve this 'highest continuous' speed in an hour.

Hipper wanted a greater radius of action than the German battle cruiser of 1915 possessed (some 2,000 to 2,500 sea miles), for operations overseas. If German bases or supply ships were available, then Hipper wanted oil-fired ships. If technology would permit, he wanted diesel engines because he said they provided a higher radius of action, contributed to ship stability, and advanced the ideal of a passage not heralded by great clouds of smoke.

The question may be asked if any ships resembling Hipper's prototype ever got on the German drawing board, after von Pohl had passed the recommendations on to Tirpitz. Several ships did get on the drawing board,¹⁴⁶ a few were launched, but none saw service in World War I or under the Versailles Treaty.

As to technical improvements which could be made in the ships Hipper already had, he canvassed his captains and endorsed their opinions in several letters to the Fleet Commander, both before and after Jutland. Suggested changes included removal of ventilation ducts between magazines to prevent spread of fire or explosion and installation of topside vents to direct any explosion or fire upward. This suggestion was a result of Capt. Maurice von Egidy's experience in the Dogger Bank battle.

Von Egidy also desired all access between magazines sealed off. He further observed, and Hipper concurred, that so little sustained high-speed operations had been carried out in peacetime that the ships' characteristics cards had not been fully worked out to top speeds. It was obvious that an annual three-hour full speed trial was inadequate preparation and therefore Hipper ordered a 24-hour full speed drill for all of the battle cruisers to be carried out at least once every three months. Von Egidy also observed that coaling took far too long and required far too many people. He said that coal that was to be used as protection should be regarded as ballast only and never used as fuel. In improving protection, Egidy concurred with Hipper's assertion that additional armour should be given to turrets, ammunition supply routes, and magazines to protect them from plunging fire. To defend against aerial attack, armoured gratings should be placed atop the smokestacks.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ USNA, PG 77733/Reel 1659, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., Capt. Maurice von Egidy of S.M.S. Seydlitz (Hipper's flagship), to Hipper 13 Mar 1915. See also Capt. Ludwig von Reuter of S.M.S. Derfflinger to Hipper 11 Mar 1915, loc. cit. See also Capt. Max von Hahn, of S.M.S. von der Tann to Hipper March 1915, n.d., loc. cit. For peacetime manoeuvre speeds see BA/MA F 728/PG 65728/Reel 1247, Akten Hochseeflotte op. cit., Übungen während der Mairreise der Hochseeflotte 1914, 2 Heft, Gefechtsbilder, Anordnungen der Manöverleitung, Höchstgeschwindigkeit, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, Drills During the May Voyage of 1914, Second Volume, Battle Scenarios Organization of Command of Manoeuvres, Top Speeds (allowed).) 16 knots was allowed for the battle cruisers and 12 knots for the battleships.

Besides protection, another serious problem in Hipper's ships which could be partially remedied by technical improvements was the relatively short range of the battle cruiser's main armament. Capt. Magnus von Levetzow,¹⁴⁸ of S.M.S. Moltke, believed the British superiority in long range artillery could be overcome if the guns in the German ships were modified to allow them to be elevated to reach a range of 25,000 meters. Hipper endorsed this in principle and indeed the elevation of the guns in Hipper's battle cruisers was increased by several degrees and their range by several thousand meters. But not by the 10,000 meter improvement Levetzow desired.¹⁴⁹

In sum, Hipper's battle cruiser materiel was a reflection of his environment as a surface force commander in the German navy whose ships suffered from a lack of adequate financing in peace and a lack of technical superiority in war.

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USNA, PG 77733/Reel 1659, op. cit., Capt. Magnus von Levetzow, of S.M.S. Moltke to Hipper 14 May 1915. See also Hipper to Admiral Hugo von Pohl, Fleet C-in-C, 7 July 1915, p. 18, loc. cit.

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Erich Gröner, op. cit., pp. 114-118.

PART III

HIPPER AND THE HIGH COMMAND

In addition to an unfavourable naval environment, Franz Hipper's parameters as a naval commander included insufficient rank and little contact with the power brokers in the German national and naval high command. Together these factors precluded Hipper's having consistent impact on national or naval policy in the World War through official channels. However, the records indicate that he did have substantial contact and impact on the succeeding fleet commanders of the German naval 'front' and that his major work was in the area of fleet operations. Consequently, this part of the work is directed toward delineating Hipper's parameters in dealing with the national and naval high commands. Additionally, Hipper's relationships with his three fleet superiors--Admirals von Ingenohl, von Pohl, and Scheer--are detailed and analyzed. Accounts of Hipper's strategical and tactical thinking are provided in the context of his performance in combat crises, culminating in his appointment in August 1918 as the last Commander-in-Chief of the High Seas Fleet.

Hipper's Parameters

Hipper's billet as Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, was an inadequate level of command and an insufficient power base from which to affect national policy on an official, continuing basis. The assignment and the command are listed on page 26 of the Imperial German Navy List following the multifarious bureaux of the Imperial Naval Office, the Admiralty Staff, the Fleet Command and the three active battle squadrons.¹ Hipper's billet was rated by Admiral Scheer² as roughly equivalent in responsibility to an Army division commander, albeit by inference because his analogy concerned the responsibility of a battle squadron commander; the test of equivalency was that only the three battle squadron commanders and the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, were authorized to assume command of the High Seas Fleet in the event of the C-in-C's death or disability in action.³

¹ Rangliste der Kaiserlichen Marine 1914 (Berlin, 1914), p. 26.

² Scheer, vom Segelschiffe zum U-boot, op. cit., p. 224.

³ BA/MA F 3468/PG 67613, Auszüge aus Qualifikationsberichten über Flaggoffiziere, Dez 1915-Dez 1917 (Excerpts from Fitness Reports on Flag Officers). See also BA/MA F 3303/PG 66710, Organisation des Seestreitkräfte (Organization of Naval Forces) Admiral von Tirpitz to Admiral von Müller 23 Apr 1913. See also P.R.O., Adm 137/4839, Director of Naval Intelligence to First Lord, Memo on German Officer Personnel Policies, loc. cit.

Scheer also equated the Fleet C-in-C to an Army Corps commander with one important difference: the Fleet C-in-C had access to the Kaiser and was one of seven⁴ officers in the navy who did. However, when Hipper became Fleet C-in-C in August 1918, replacing Scheer, the latter's reorganization of the navy resulted in only one officer having direct access to the Kaiser: Scheer.⁵

Hipper's simultaneous lack of greater rank and a sufficient power base practically guaranteed lack of continuous or sustained contact with those who held power in the national, political, military and naval high commands.

His 'relationship,' if one could call it that, with the Kaiser, was limited to a few meetings during the war. The first time⁶ was when the Kaiser visited the Fleet after the Dogger Bank battle, a visit made on 4 February 1915. While Hipper does not record any significant conversation he had with the Kaiser on this occasion, he is nevertheless pictured with the Emperor inspecting battle damage to the Seydlitz, which was

⁴ Herwig, op. cit., pp. 26ff.

⁵ Walther Hubatsch, Der Admiralstab und die obersten Marinebehörden in Deutschland 1848-1945, (Frankfurt, 1958) p. 178. See also BA/MA F 33021d/PG 66705/Reel 450, Akten Marine-Kabinetts, op. cit., Scheer to Capelle 9 Aug 1918, Scheer to Müller 16 Aug 1918.

⁶ BA/MA Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 2/19-20, 4 Feb 1915.

Hipper's flagship.⁷ The Kaiser's next visit to Wilhelms-haven at which Hipper was present was on 23-24 February 1916⁸ shortly after Admiral Scheer had assumed command of the Fleet. The Kaiser was briefed by Scheer aboard the flagship Friedrich der Grosse and later addressed the officers in the officers' mess ashore. Hipper observed that this briefing resulted in a resumption of intensified U-boat warfare.⁹

The next time Hipper saw the Kaiser was 5 June 1916 when His Majesty awarded him the Pour le Merite, Germany's highest combat decoration, for his performance at the battle of Jutland. After the ceremonies, Hipper accompanied the Kaiser on a visit to the badly damaged battle cruiser, Derfflinger,¹⁰ and dined with him in the officers' mess ashore.

Hipper's last meeting with the Kaiser was 18 August 1917 at Wilhelmshaven when he visited the fleet after the mutinies at Kiel. From Wilhelmshaven the Kaiser made a trip in the battleship Baden to inspect the defences at Heligoland Island but Hipper did not accompany him, as he

⁷ John Wingate (ed.), Warships in Profile, vol.ii, S.M.S. Seydlitz, p. 32, photo of Hipper and the Kaiser.

⁸ Walter Görlitz (ed.), The Kaiser and His Court, The Diaries, Note Books and Letters of Admiral Georg Alexander von Müller Chief of the Naval Cabinet 1914-1918, (London, 1961), p. 138.

⁹ BA/MA Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 4/33, 23-24 Feb 1916.

¹⁰ Ibid, 5/21, 5 June 1916.

had to prepare for the next day's manoeuvres.¹¹ Hipper was to make other comments about the Kaiser in his war diary but he never saw the Kaiser again.

Other records and accounts also show Hipper's 'relationship' with the Kaiser was inconsequential despite his earlier exposure to the royal family. In the voluminous records¹² of the interviews and audiences granted by the Kaiser between 1899 and 1918, Hipper's name does not appear. In the private papers¹³ of Admiral Georg von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet from April 1906 until November 1918, Hipper is not among those recorded as seeing the Kaiser at times other than those Hipper himself mentioned in his personal war diary. Again, the Nachlass von Levetzow which contains substantial correspondence with the Kaiser particularly after the war, gives no indication that Levetzow's first war-time commander (Hipper) either knew or corresponded with the Kaiser.¹⁴ And in the

¹¹ Ibid, 7/31-32, 18 Aug 1917.

¹² BA/MA F 349013/PG 67787-67790/Reels 565, 566, Vorträge und Audienzen bei Sr. Majestät, Apr 1899-März 1918, (Addresses and Audiences of His Majesty, Apr 1899-Mar 1918).

¹³ BA/MA N158/4, 5, Nachlass von Müller, 1910-1926.

¹⁴ M.O.D., N.H.B., Nachlass Kontre Admiral Magnus von Levetzow, Briefe und Schriftsachen, vols. 9-35, Reels 44-48. For originals see BA/MA N239, Nachlass von Levetzow, July 1918-Dec 1932.

Memoirs which the Kaiser himself wrote, Hipper does not appear.¹⁵ Nor is Hipper credited in any of the recent major interpretations of German war policy with having any role in the decision-making process.¹⁶

Turning to the civilian political side of the German government, the evidence indicates that Hipper had little contact with it and no impact. Of the four chancellors--Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Georg Michaelis, Count Georg von Hertling and Max von Baden--Hipper met only Bethmann Hollweg and this was at a meeting on 30 June 1916 aboard Admiral Scheer's flagship in the Jade river after the battle of Jutland. According to Hipper's account¹⁷ of this meeting which also included von Holtzendorff, Chief of the Admiralty Staff, it was Scheer who advanced the Fleet's views on future war strategy and Hipper himself remained silent. When Bethmann Hollweg wrote his Memoirs he did not mention Hipper.¹⁸ Nor is Hipper mentioned in the memoirs of the chancellors who succeeded Bethmann Hollweg except for a notation in von Baden's that Hipper

¹⁵ Ex-Kaiser Wilhelm, My Memoirs 1877-1918, (London, 1922).

¹⁶ Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter, vols. iii and iv, (Miami, 1972-1973). See also Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, (London, 1967). See also Hans Gatzke, Germany's Drive to the West, (Baltimore, 1966).

¹⁷ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 5/24, 30 June 1916. See also Scheer, vom Segelschiff, op. cit., pp. 334-335, and Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, op. cit., pp. 177-178. See also Bethmann Hollweg, Betrachtungen zum Weltkrieg, vol. ii, Während des Krieges, (Berlin, 1921), pp. 133ff.

¹⁸ Bethmann Hollweg, op. cit.

was Fleet C-in-C at the end of the war.¹⁹ Hipper does rate a footnote in the recent volume of published documents edited by Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey concerning von Baden's regime.²⁰

Hipper's 'relationship' with the army seems limited to an occasional personal comment in his war diary on the actions of leading figures.²¹ This lack of contact is significant since after August 1916 'German military leaders became the undisputed rulers of Germany, no longer subordinated to the emperor, still less held in check by the chancellor...Success, the key to political

¹⁹ Georg Michaelis, Für Staat und Volk, Eine Lebensgeschichte, (Berlin, 1922) and Georg von Hertling, Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben, 2 vols, (Munich, 1920). See also Max von Baden, The Memoirs of Prince Max of Baden, 2 vols, (New York, 1928), vol. ii, pp. 275, 282.

²⁰ Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey, Die Regierung des Prinzen Max von Baden, (Düsseldorf, 1963), p. 470, n. 20.

²¹ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., for mention of Generals Mackensen and Hindenburg see 3/18, entry for 18 July 1915 and 4/5 19 Sept 1915; Mackensen 4/8 10 Oct 1915; von Falkenhayn 4/28 5 Feb 1916; Hindenburg and Ludendorff 5/22 8 June 1916; Hindenburg, Ludendorff and Falkenhayn 6/7 30 Aug 1916; Mackensen and Falkenhayn 6/15 27 Nov 1916; Hindenburg and Ludendorff 7/23 4 July 1917; Hindenburg and Ludendorff 8/30 and 8/32 11 Sept 1918; Ludendorff 9/8 26 Oct 1918.

authority in Germany, rested with the military leaders alone.²² The succeeding chiefs of staff of the German army were Moltke, Falkenhayn and the duumvirate of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Moltke does not appear in Hipper's diary at all nor does Hipper appear in Moltke's.²³ General Erich von Falkenhayn, Prussian Minister of War and Chief of the General Staff 1914-1916, does not mention Hipper in his account of these years.²⁴ But in early 1916 Hipper characterized von Falkenhayn as a defeatist and an enemy of the U-boat.²⁵ But later that year, after Falkenhayn was relieved of his post in grand headquarters and assigned to the Balkans, Hipper's attitude changed because of Falkenhayn's success in that theatre.²⁶ Field

²² A.J.P. Taylor, The Course of German History, (New York, 1962), p. 171. See also A. Rosenberg, Imperial Germany, The Birth of the German Republic 1871-1918, (Boston, 1964), pp. 114-152. See also Gerhard Ritter, op. cit., vol. iii, The Tragedy of Statesmanship--Bethmann Hollweg as War Chancellor, (Miami, 1972), pp. 209-457. See also Ritter, op. cit., vol. iv, The Reign of German Militarism and the Disaster of 1918, (Miami, 1973).

²³ Helmuth von Moltke, Erinnerungen, Briefe, Dokumente, 1877-1916, (Stuttgart, 1922).

²⁴ Erich von Falkenhayn, General Headquarters 1914-1916 and Its Critical Decisions, (London, 1919).

²⁵ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 4/28, 5 Feb 1916.

²⁶ Ibid, 6/15, 27 Nov 1916.

Marshall Paul von Hindenburg's memoirs do not mention Hipper and neither do those of Ludendorff.²⁷ In short, Hipper seems to have had no contact with and no influence on the military leadership.

Indeed, even his involvement with the national naval command was minimal. Hipper dealt with the seven senior officers who had access to the Kaiser through his own C-in-C who was included in this select group. Because of Hipper's level of rank, it was only through the Fleet C-in-C that Hipper would have any contact with them in his capacity as Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces.²⁸ And an examination of the documents in the Naval Cabinet, Naval State Secretary's Office and Admiralty Staff shows Hipper had little influence through official channels. Of the senior naval officers who had access to the Kaiser and were most important in their impact on policy, the following admirals played leading roles: Admiral Georg von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet 1906-1918, Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, Secretary of State for Navy 1897-1916 and his successor, Admiral Eduard von Capelle, 1916-1918,

²⁷ Paul von Hindenburg, Out of My Life, (London, 1920). See also Erich Ludendorff, My War Memories, (London, 1920).

²⁸ Every paper Hipper submitted to higher authority went via his Fleet C-in-C. For example, see n. 136, Part I of this work, Hipper on Recruiting System. Also see BA/MA F 145/PG 75106/Reel 655, Hipper on Cruiser Warfare.

and the three Chiefs of the Admiralty Staff, Admirals von Pohl (1914-1915), Bachmann (1915) and von Holtzendorff (1915-1918).²⁹

There is massive documentary evidence to indicate Hipper was not involved in the decision-making process which had its origins in the Naval Cabinet. He had nothing to do with the organization of the higher naval commands,³⁰ does not appear anywhere in the correspondence concerning differences of opinion among the higher naval commands³¹ which discussed the smaller things at times such as the fleet drill book and the torpedoboats' drill book, subjects close to Hipper's heart, as well as

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Herwig, op. cit., pp. 272-274. See also Ritter, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 602, entries for von Müller; p. 608 entries for von Tirpitz; p. 593 entries for von Capelle; p. 603 entries for von Pohl; p. 590 entries for von Bachmann; p. 598 entries for von Holtzendorff. See also Fritz Fischer, op. cit., entries for each of the above. See also Gatzke, op. cit., entries for each of the above. Carl-Axel Gemzell, op. cit., also details the important roles played by each of these men in German naval strategy as does Walther Hubatsch in Der Admiralstab, op. cit.. Wilhelm Deist, Militär und Innenpolitik im Weltkrieg 1914-1918, (Dusseldorf, 1970) is another good record as is Görlitz, op. cit., and Görlitz, Der Kaiser..., (Berlin, 1965). Also see Tirpitz, Deutsche Ohnmachtspolitik im Weltkrieg, (Berlin, 1926).

30 BA/MA F 3301/PG 66696-66699, Akten Kaiserliches Marine-Kabinet, Organisation der Obersten Marinebehörden, Juni 1888-Sept 1918 (Papers of the Imperial Naval Cabinet, Organization of the Higher Naval Commands, June 1888-Sept 1918).

31 BA/MA F 3302/PG 66700/Reel 488, AHMK, Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen den obersten Marinebehörden, Nov 1892-März 1911, (Differences of Opinion Among the Higher Naval Commands).

the larger questions of spheres of authority of the highest naval commands. Hipper made no comment on the Admiralty Staff organization³² which would serve him in war by providing intelligence. Despite his operational concern for good training and readiness, Hipper did not contribute to the files of the German navy's training establishment.³³ He did not contribute to the discussion centered in the Naval Cabinet concerning the organization of naval forces.³⁴ This file indicates that no 'front' commander of scouting forces participated in the decisions affecting the evolution of his billet. Ironically, the Naval Cabinet file on torpedo force organization shows Hipper had no input on the way these important forces were set up.³⁵ The worth of inventions to the war at sea was decided by the Naval Cabinet, not by the people who would use them.³⁶ The Naval Cabinet also kept files of articles

³² BA/MA F 33021d/PG 66701-66705/Reels 539, 540, AHMK, Organisation des Admiralstabs der Marine März 1899-Nov 1918, (Organization of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy, March 1899-Nov 1918).

³³ BA/MA F 3302 1e/PG 66706/Reel 540, Organisation des Bildungswesens der Marine Sept 1884-Apr 1914, (Organization of the Naval Training Command).

³⁴ BA/MA F 33031f/PG 66707-66711/Reels 510, 511, AHMK, Organisation des Seestreitkräfte June 1891-Aug 1918, (Organization of Naval Forces).

³⁵ BA/MA F 3304/PG 66714/Reel 513, AHMK, Organisation des Torpedowesens Juli 1890-Okt 1914, (Organization of the Torpedo Forces).

³⁶ BA/MA F 3310IVb/PG 66667-66668/Reel 631, AHMK, Erfindungen 1914-1918, (Inventions).

or books written by all serving or retired naval officers; Hipper published nothing.³⁷ Exercise and drill reports of the High Seas Fleet found in the Naval Cabinet papers indicate Hipper submitted only those reports which went via Fleet superiors.³⁸ Thus, it appears Hipper figures only in the drill reports of the High Seas Fleet so far as the Naval Cabinet papers³⁹ are concerned. In the private papers of the Chief of the Naval Cabinet, Admiral von Müller,⁴⁰ Hipper is mentioned in connection with Tirpitz' attempt to fire him; fortunately for Hipper, von Müller refused. Müller was able to do this because as he explained

³⁷ BA/MA F 3386/PG 67143-67415, AHMK, Literarische Veröffentlichungen von Offizieren und Beamten Mai 1891-Juni 1916, (Publications by Officers and Officials).

³⁸ BA/MA F 3391/PG 67211-67219, 67230, 67233, 67240-67243/Reels 492, 513, 514, 515, AHMK, Übungsberichte Aug 1899-März 1915, (Drill Reports).

³⁹ BA/MA F 3391-3396/PG 67237-67246/Reels 494, 515, 516, AHMK, Akten Hochseeflotte Übungsberichte, Okt 1905-Dec 1914, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, Exercise Reports). See F 1912, 1913 May manoeuvres. See also BA/MA F 3428/PG 67388/Reel 494, AHMK, Beiheft Schiffersatz Okt 1915-Sept 1918, (Special File Shipbuilding/Ship Design). See also BA/MA F 3443 XXXI/PG 67475/Reels 501, 520, Flottenpolitik, Aug 1911-Feb 1912, (Fleet Policy). See also BA/MA F 3444/PG 67476/Reel 634, AHMK betr. Militärpolitische Fragen Apr 1918, (Papers of the Naval Cabinet Concerning Military-Political Questions).

⁴⁰ BA/MA N159, Nachlass von Müller, 4/343, 31 Jan 1915.

to Rear Admiral August von Heeringen, of the Imperial Naval Office, 'I cannot manage everything but I can hold up anything.'⁴¹

Hipper also dealt with the Admiralty Staff which served him and other front commanders with intelligence,⁴² and analyses of operational proposals,⁴³ geopolitics and naval strategy. The latter files show no contributions from Hipper which were adopted.⁴⁴

⁴¹ A. von Tirpitz, Politische Dokumente, op. cit., vol.ii, op. cit., p. 33.

⁴² See BA/MA F 426/PG 76945-76958, Englische Hafen 1914-1918, (English Harbours); BA/MA F 454/PG 77063-77064/Reels 1170, 1171, Ausgegangene Nachrichten über englische und französische Streitkräfte, 1 Aug-29 Dec 1914, (Intelligence Disseminated on English and French Warships); BA/MA F 491/PG 77211-77228/Reels 1101-1103, 1049, 1050, 1195, 1196, Nachrichten über die feindliche Flotte und Küstenbefestigungen 14 Aug 1916-16 Mar 1917, (Intelligence on the Enemy Fleet and Coastal Defences); BA/MA F 1884-1890/PG 63864-63910/Reels 1461, 1459, Akten B.d.A., (Papers of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces). See PG 63869 and 63892 for Hipper's intelligence received after Jutland. The other files were sunk.

⁴³ BA/MA F 149/PG 75106/Reel 655, Hipper on Cruiser Warfare, with marginal notes by Rear Admiral Paul Behncke, deputy chief, Admiralty Staff, 14 Nov 1914. See also Hubatsch, op. cit., pp. 165ff. See also Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 2/12, 22 Jan 1915.

⁴⁴ BA/MA F 160/PG 75652-75654/Reels 951, 952, Laufende Marine-Politik, Nordsee Apr 1918-Mai 1919, (Current Naval Policy, North Sea). See also BA/MA F 166/PG 75704/Reel 872, Akten betr laufende Marine-Politik Nordost atlantik Jan-Dec 1918, (Papers Concerning Current Naval Policy on the Northeast Atlantic). See also BA/MA F 166/PG 75704/Reel 982, Akten betr. Militärpolitische Angelegenheiten: Deutschland Dec 1917-Apr 1919, (Military-Political Situation, Germany); BA/MA F 420/PG 76902-76906/Reel 995, Seekriegsführung der Nordseekriegschauplatz 1914-1918, (Conduct of the Naval War in North Sea); BA/MA F 431/PG 67974-67975/Reel 1060, Schriftwechsel über O-Directiven, (Correspondence on Operational Directives).

However, one particular file--Admiralty Staff Correspondence with other commands--contains a fair amount from Hipper via his C-in-C to the Imperial Naval Office which provided a copy to the Admiralty Staff. Hipper requested alterations to torpedoboats, cruisers, small craft and other vessels to suit war exigencies.⁴⁵ Records of the Naval High Command, successor to the Admiralty Staff from August to November 1918, indicate Hipper had no impact on grand strategy during this period when he was the Fleet C-in-C.⁴⁶

Another indication that Hipper's involvement with the national naval command was minimal may be found in the small number of dealings he had with the Imperial Naval Office concerning materiel, its primary wartime activity. These dealings were mostly in the area of 'nuts and bolts' matters as cited above.⁴⁷ However, it

⁴⁵ USNA/PG 76529-76534/Reels 982-984, 928-929, 1027-1029, 1030, Admiralstab der Marine, Befehle an andere Behörden, 1 Aug 1914-30 Sept 1918, (Admiralty Staff of the Navy, Correspondence and Orders With and To Other Commands).

⁴⁶ BA/MA F 562/PG 69295-69296/Reel 1184, Akten Seekriegsleitung, Akten OPII AIX Meldungen an S.M. 18 Aug 1918, (Reports to His Majesty, the Kaiser, from the Naval War Command); BA/MA F 566/PG 69329/Reel 1185, ALL Kriegsführung auf dem Nord. Kriegsschauplatz 21 Aug 1918-7 Apr 1919, (Conduct of the War in the Northern Theatre).

⁴⁷ USNA/PG 76530/Reel 983, op. cit., n. 45 supra, Hipper to Fleet to Imperial Naval Office, cc to Admiralty Staff, 27 Sept 1914, 'Substitution of Command Boats of the I. and II. Minehunting Divisions for S 104 and S 106.' See also loc. cit., Hipper to von Pohl, 8 May 1915, forwarded to Imperial Naval Office, cc to Admiralty Staff. See also Hipper to Scheer 3 Nov 1916, forwarded to Imperial Naval Office, cc to Admiralty Staff.

should be noted that the policy-making role of the Imperial Naval Office was diminished after the war broke out, primarily because of restrictions⁴⁸ which the Kaiser applied to Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, State Secretary of the Imperial Naval Office. Nevertheless, because Tirpitz tried twice to have Hipper sacked, it would be a serious omission not to explore the circumstances. Hipper's biography by Waldeyer-Hartz suffers from such omissions as well as a pro-Tirpitz bias.⁴⁹ It ignores the published criticism⁵⁰ of the actions of the B.d.A. on the 28th of August 1914, the Battle of Heligoland Bight. British light and heavy cruiser forces swept into the area and sank three light cruisers and a large torpedoboat; Tirpitz's son, Wolf, was the paymaster of S.M.S. Mainz, one of the three cruisers sunk. The day after the action Tirpitz wrote:

⁴⁸ Ritter, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 18, 149, 153. See also Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 494, letter dated 2 January 1914. See also BA/MA F 728, Reichsmarineamt Akten Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Papers for 1914-1918. These trace the influence on construction and manoeuvres which evolved after 1915 into almost entirely materiel matters.

⁴⁹ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp. 94 ff, 110 ff, 252.

⁵⁰ Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 76.

I can scarcely hope that Wolf will be among the few saved from the Mainz; circumstances were too much against him. The small cruisers were too reckless, and apart from that, I feel very bitterly that my advice did not appear to be properly followed. One doesn't send them against armoured ships unless one has his battleships and torpedo craft close behind. But I won't protest, as I can't review the events that proceeded it.⁵¹

Tirpitz' published documents indicate that he did indeed protest, however, on the same day he wrote the above. In a memo to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral von Pohl, Tirpitz criticized the order given by the B.d.A (Hipper) to the light cruisers to repel the attack by enemy light forces even though the German ships did not have capital ship support.⁵² And on the same day Tirpitz, in his explanations to the Kaiser, said that 'both battle cruisers and fleet should have sortied to support the light cruisers at the first reports of enemy action.'⁵³ This criticism seems valid especially since the first signal of enemy action was at 0637 when the entire fleet could have sortied but⁵⁴ Hipper only sent reinforcing light cruisers out at 0855.

⁵¹ Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 456, 29 Aug 1914.

⁵² Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 76.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 77.

⁵⁴ BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62446, Kriegstagebuch der B.d.A., (War Diary of Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces), 28 Aug 1914, entry for 0855.

However, the intelligence Hipper had failed to indicate heavy forces would be needed as no heavy enemy ships had been reported. A complicating factor was the weather: clear in Wilhelmshaven harbour, rain in the Outer Roads, and fog in the outer bight where the action took place. Further, as early as 29 July 1914 Hipper had been ordered to take over the defence of the German Bight but Ingenohl, Fleet C-in-C, had determined the disposition of the ships in the outer defence line. On 28 August Hipper sent cruisers to support ships occupying positions which the Fleet C-in-C had ordered. In sum, while Tirpitz' criticism is valid after the fact, it remains true that only the Fleet C-in-C could have ordered out the battleships but Hipper could have ordered Moltke, von der Tann, Blücher and Seydlitz as well as the battleship Helgoland which was on outpost duty and under his operational control that morning. But this would have had to be done before 0830 when the tide was sufficient for the ships to cross the Jade River bar. The first report⁵⁵ of British capital ships in the Heligoland Bight was from the Mainz at 1303.

Tirpitz continued to press his criticism of Hipper's action on 28 August in a personal letter to Admiral Wilhelm von Lans, Chief of the First Battle Squadron, mentioning Hipper by title rather than name, a practice

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BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62446, Kriegstagebuch der B.d.A., op. cit., 28 Aug 1914, entry for 1303.

Tirpitz adheres to in his Memoirs and the two volumes of published documents.⁵⁶ Tirpitz told Lans he was writing to him 'because I have no formal right to write to von Ingenohl.' He said he did not understand the order which the B.d.A. gave which had German light cruisers attacking British cruisers and destroyers without benefit of German torpedoboa forces operating with them. Tirpitz stated the two were designed to work together and sending one without the other was a grave tactical error. And another mistake by the B.d.A., he said, was the order to the light cruisers to pursue the enemy.⁵⁷ Lans, however, defended Hipper, noting the Fleet C-in-C did not order the heavy ships out and Hipper did not intend to have cruisers attack without support.⁵⁸ Lans also said that the cruisers Frauenlob and Stettin did a very good job supporting the German torpedoboa flotillas which were in the outer defence line and that the B.d.A. had never given an order for the light cruisers to pursue the enemy.

Ingenohl also staunchly defended Hipper to the Kaiser, noting that the heavy ships had been ordered not to go out for strategical reasons.⁵⁹ But Admiral von Pohl, who agreed

⁵⁶ Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 81-83.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 82.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 86, Lans to Tirpitz, 13 Sept 1914.

⁵⁹ BA/MA, F 3890a/PG 62474, op. cit., von Ingenohl, p. 11.

with Ingenohl's strategy, and Prince Henry of Prussia, who disagreed with Ingenohl's strategy, both blamed Hipper and his captains for not doing a better job anyway.⁶⁰ The German official history is vague in that it assigns 'some blame' to the individual cruiser commanders and 'other higher commands.'⁶¹ Some six weeks later Tirpitz received a letter from his son, Wolf, from a prison camp in England and Tirpitz said in his Memoirs:⁶²

...The letter of the 9th with copy, by the paymaster of the Mainz has just come to hand. My poor boy, who felt so strongly about the blunders in our leadership on August 28th! It is doubtful whether he would suffer less now if he saw how his father's work was being turned to no purpose.

Meanwhile, Tirpitz had seen the Kaiser a second time on the 4th of September 1914 and asserted the blame for the results of the battle off Heligoland accrued to the B.d.A.⁶³

Five months later, on 24 January 1915, Hipper lost the battle cruiser Blücher in the battle of the Dogger Bank. Again it should be noted that Hipper's biographer, Waldeyer-Hartz, asserts there^{were} no accusations of incompetence

⁶⁰ Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 97, Pohl to Ingenohl, 13 Sept 1914, and p. 101, Prince Heinrich to Tirpitz, 10 Sept 1914.

⁶¹ Otto Groos, Der Krieg in der Nordsee, vol. i, (Berlin, 1922), pp. 210, 212.

⁶² Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 477.

⁶³ Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

made against Hipper,⁶⁴ but it would seem otherwise according to the diary of Admiral Georg von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet. His entry for the days 30 January-4 February 1915 says:⁶⁵

Still in Berlin. Sunday. A hard working day for me in Berlin. Just found time to have lunch at Arndt Holtzenendorff's with Admiral v. H. (Holtzenendorff) and Dr. Jäckel and wife. The reports that have come back from the battle of the 24th have brought us to the conclusion that a change in the command should have utmost priority: Pohl for Ingenohl, Bachmann for Pohl (Tirpitz also wanted the Cruiser Commander, Rear-Admiral Hipper fired, but I do not agree). Very difficult decision; letter written to von Ingenohl.

1 Feb. Monday...in the case of the change of command, it has been completed very smoothly. I did not detect one iota of human sympathy...

4 Feb. Wilhelmshaven. Beautiful weather. Pohl took over command of the Fleet. In the meantime the various views about the events of the cruisers' action of the 24th have brought about the consensus of opinion that Admiral Hipper conducted the whole matter quite sensibly.

In evaluating the relationship between Hipper and Tirpitz it is well to note the omission of Hipper's name from the Tirpitz memoirs, published documents and unpublished correspondence with other admirals. Beyond

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Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., p. 160.

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BA/MA N 159, Nachlass von Müller, 4/343, 30 Jan-4 Feb 1915.

these two battles there were other differences between Hipper and Tirpitz. In the critical weeks at the beginning of the war, Hipper supported the strategy advocated by the Kaiser and Bethmann Hollweg that the fleet should be used defensively, a strategy opposed by Tirpitz.⁶⁶ Hipper also criticized Tirpitz materiel in several official reports, requesting larger guns for light cruisers and torpedoboats.⁶⁷ Finally, Hipper successfully opposed an idea advanced by Tirpitz that four new light cruisers should be sent to Flanders to prey on Allied shipping in the Channel; Hipper suspected this idea was politically motivated for a Tirpitz gain in the Reichstag.⁶⁸ In sum, the Hipper-Tirpitz relationship was more likely to be of a limiting nature for Hipper, and Hipper's comment on Tirpitz' Memoirs provides its own

⁶⁶ BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/10, 6 Aug 1914. For the Kaiser's view see Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 41-42. For Bethmann Hollweg, loc. cit. For Tirpitz, loc. cit., p. 44. Cf. Herwig, op. cit., p. 176 for a superficial interpretation of Tirpitz and Hollweg on strategy.

⁶⁷ USNA, PG 77733/Reel 1659, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., pp. 2ff. See also Hipper to Fleet C-in-C 27 Sept 1914 in n. 47 supra. See also Nachlass Hipper on rearmament of light cruisers, 4/18, 11-12 Dec 1915.

⁶⁸ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 3/12, 11 June 1915.

insight. In December 1919 Hipper wrote to Admiral von Trotha, chief of the newly established German Admiralty,⁶⁹ and said:

It would have been better if he (Tirpitz) had given a more substantive description of the work the Fleet did during the war...for a work so largely awaited, it is a grave disappointment ...the real tragedy is in the failure of the life's work of the great statesman who wrote it.⁷⁰

Hipper thus stands in agreement with latter-day interpreters of German history and German naval strategy.⁷¹ But his personal view of Tirpitz would seem to be somewhat less than adulation.

In retrospect, Hipper's personal influence on the national naval command was minimal despite the preceding exposition of his differences with Tirpitz. Even after Tirpitz resigned in March 1916, Hipper seems to have had no dealings of substance with his successor, Admiral Eduard Capelle.⁷² The other six positions besides the Imperial Naval Office Tirpitz headed, which entailed access to the

⁶⁹ Albert Röhr, Handbuch der deutschen Marine Geschichte, (Oldenburg/Hamburg, 1963), p. 139.

⁷⁰ NS/SA, Dep 18 A132, op. cit., Hipper to Trotha, 24 Dec 1919.

⁷¹ Ritter, op. cit., vol. ii, The European Powers and the Wilhelminian Empire, 1890-1914, (Miami, 1972), p. 140; A.J.M. Hyatt (ed), Dreadnought to Polaris: Maritime Strategy Since Mahan, (Annapolis, 1973), pp. 12-18; see also Berghahn, Der Tirpitz Plan, op. cit., p. 604.

⁷² BA/MA, N 170/1-2, Nachlass Capelle (Eduard), 1914-1918.

Kaiser, included the Naval Cabinet, the Admiralty Staff, the Inspector General of the Navy, the chief of the Baltic Naval Station, the chief of the North Sea Naval Station, and the C-in-C of the High Seas Fleet. The two naval station commandants were seldom important to Hipper although at the end of the war his involvement with them was critical in the course of events during the mutinies and revolution of 1918, discussed in Part IV of this work.

There were two physical parameters which affected Hipper's dealings with the national and naval high command: time underway and distance from the decision-makers. Except for periods of leave, most of Hipper's time was spent aboard his flagships, Seydlitz, Lützow and Hindenburg, and the base ship Niobe, located in Wilhelmshaven. Records indicate he never got to Berlin or visited grand headquarters during the war.⁷³

In reviewing Hipper's parameters thus far, it is apparent that whatever he may have thought about the great issues affecting Germany his opinions had little impact on the official deliberations surrounding the events. His rank and power base as Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces,

⁷³ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., is a complete record of Hipper's daily existence from May 1914-January 1919, and no entry to indicate a visit to Berlin or grand headquarters. See also Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., for an official chronology. See also K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., 29 July 1914 to 9 Aug 1918; K.T.B. des K.d.H. (War Diary, High Seas Fleet Command), 9 Aug 1918-30 Oct 1918).

were insufficient for him to affect policy ashore. Hipper did, however, have substantial contact and impact on the succeeding fleet commanders of the German naval 'front.' Records show he had a leading role in the operations and command of the High Seas Fleet which the national and naval high commands had created.

Hipper and the Fleet

The long and boring process called war is punctuated by short, unbelievably intense and extremely deadly, periods of combat. The sum of a commander's achievements during these periods mark him as a leader or no, for combat is the ultimate test of any military commander or naval leader.

During the war Hipper served under three fleet commanders until he himself became Commander-in-Chief. Each of his superiors is dealt with chronologically. The national and naval policy under which Hipper and his respective commanders worked is set forth along with accounts of Hipper's planning activity.

His performance with inadequate materiel, orders from the high command that were hardly models of clarity, and frequent foreknowledge of his plans by the enemy, can be evaluated by weighing his conduct in five significant engagements. These actions, in chronological order,

were the battle of Heligoland Bight on 28 August 1914, the bombardment of Great Yarmouth on 3 November 1914, the bombardment of Scarborough and Hartlepool and the action in the English Channel on 16-17 December 1914, the battle of Dogger Bank on 24 January 1915, and the battle of Jutland on 31 May-1 June 1916.

German national policy just prior to the outset of World War I was set upon war. According to Imanuel Geiss, 'The documents prove beyond doubt that Berlin not only knew of the possibility of war against Serbia, but actually pressed for it.'⁷⁴ He notes that 'Berlin was well aware that Russia would be forced to intervene, making world war inevitable.'⁷⁵ There are also indications that Bethmann Hollweg tried to keep England neutral in the event of a continental war.⁷⁶ Interestingly enough, Hipper perceived the fallacy of any war plan which dealt only with France and Russia and ^{he} believed England would not remain neutral. This was on 27 July 1914.⁷⁷ The final British answer to the German government came two days later to this effect.

⁷⁴ Imanuel Geiss, July 1914 The Outbreak of the First World War Selected Documents, (New York, 1974), p. 364. For documents see pp. 106, 96, 126, 42-44, 74.

⁷⁵ Ibid, loc. cit.

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 268-269.

⁷⁷ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/8, 27 July 1914.

At the outbreak of the war the German strategy followed was a modification of the Schlieffen plan which mandated an attack through neutral Belgium on France and a holding action in the east against Russia.⁷⁸ One leading officer in the German navy, Reinhard Scheer, noted that 'The strategical plans of the Army had a decisive influence on the functions of the fleet. The Navy had the duty of supporting the Army on two fronts in such a way that its rear was unconditionally secured against any danger threatening from the north.'⁷⁹ The political plans of the government called for a strong fleet as a vital bargaining counter at the negotiations.⁸⁰ In a situation like this, with both military and political pressure exerted to do as little as possible, the options of a fleet commander were somewhat limited. Nevertheless,

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B. H. Liddell Hart, History of the First World War, (London, 1970), p. 42. See also Walter G6rlitz, History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945, (New York, 1963), p. 157. See also Barbara Tuchman, The Guns of August, (New York, 1962), pp. 41-42.

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Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

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Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Betrachtungen zum Weltkriege, vol. ii, Wahrend des Krieges, pp. 8ff. Also cited in Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 45. See also Gemzell, op. cit. p. 177, n. 8, for a specific mention of the fleet's value in negotiations.

though a struggle over the fleet's limited options might be expected between the fleet leadership and grand headquarters, at war's outset 'there was no real struggle over military or political issues between the Chancellor and the naval command.'⁸¹ The Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral Hugo von Pohl, the Chief of the Naval Cabinet, Admiral Georg von Müller, and the Chief of the High Seas Fleet, Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl, all agreed on a basic Kleinkrieg (little war) strategy to protect the German north coast from the enemy and to preserve the fleet from loss at little or no cost to the enemy. This strategy, said Gemzell, was one of four 'action alternatives in German naval strategical planning' from 1914 to 1918.⁸² These alternatives were 1) the annihilation battle conducted with battleships in any number of places around the rim land of Europe; 2) the Kleinkrieg or guerilla war of attrition conducted with light ships, especially U-boats and torpedoboats in the North Sea; 3) the commerce war including surface raiders or U-boats in the Atlantic area, and 4) a war against sea communications using battleships

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Ritter, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 19. See also Pohl, op. cit., pp. 6-7. See also Görlitz, The Kaiser and His Court, op. cit., p. 17, and Ingenohl, op. cit., p. 5.

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Gemzell, op. cit., p. 175.

and submarines in the Atlantic approaches with a concomitant demand for bases flanking the British position in the North Sea. At one time or another Hipper advocated all but the annihilation battle during Admiral von Ingenohl's tenure as Fleet C-in-C. For example, on 6 August 1914, the same day as Pohl and the Chancellor were agreeing on strategy, Hipper noted the following:⁸³

...Nothing has been seen of the English fleet. Perhaps they are not as far with their preparations as we, or perhaps they are being very cautious about undertaking an offensive sortie against our coasts and desire for the time being to adapt to the tactic of a distant blockade.

It is worth noting that Tirpitz had asked von Ingenohl during the 1913 manoeuvres about the possibility of the British adopting distant blockade tactics, to which question Ingenohl had no answer at the time;⁸⁴ he later said that English publications gave every indication of a flexible attitude on this question and that a distant blockade had the permanent condition of American concurrence. Ingenohl also recorded Admiral Scheer as being of the opinion the English would not take up a distant blockade because it would be a loss to

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/10, 6 Aug 1914.

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Admiral Albert Hopman, Das Logbuch eines deutschen Seeoffiziers, (Berlin, 1924), p. 40.

their prestige. Ingenohl still believed the English would attack to offset the military victories the Germans achieved in the east and west in the first few months of the war.⁸⁵ The British did not attack or attempt to impose a close blockade with their battle fleet; they did, as Hipper surmised, adopt the tactic of a distant blockade.⁸⁶ In another entry for 6 August Hipper records his agreement with the Kleinkrieg strategy advocated by the high command and Ingenohl:

We have absolutely no reason to go to the attack now. The best and only possible course which we can take is to wait. First, England must establish her blockade which will hopefully afford opportunities for our torpedoboats and U-boats to draw the enemy's fangs and enable us to undertake action under more equal circumstances. This would afford us a possibility of success with the main fleet and under good circumstances we could win the battle.

Hipper's comment reflects the thinking behind the Admiralty Staff approach to German naval strategy from 1913 onwards under the leadership of Admiral von Pohl.⁸⁷

Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl was Hipper's first Fleet Commander in war. Von Ingenohl had had some combat

⁸⁵ Ingenohl, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

⁸⁶ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., loc. cit.

⁸⁷ Gemzell, op. cit., p. 139.

experience in China, had commanded the East Asia Cruiser Squadron and the Second (High Seas Fleet) Battle Squadron as well as serving under Tirpitz in the Imperial Naval Office.⁸⁸ Ingenohl, in his official secret evaluation of the first six months of the war, said in January 1918 he believed that the German fleet was inferior to the British for several reasons: the British had nearly twice as many ships of each type, their firepower was significantly greater, superior enlisted personnel because of length of service.⁸⁹ There is evidence, however, that Ingenohl himself had recommended Tirpitz continue to arm the German fleet with guns of smaller calibre than the British when Ingenohl was fleet C-in-C before the war.⁹⁰

The German official history contains a clear chart of naval strength which confirms Ingenohl's observations on numbers and firepower.⁹¹ His evaluation of enlisted personnel is open to question. The German ratings were thoroughly trained, according to British naval intelligence.⁹²

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BA/MA, Sammelheft, Die deutschen Admirale, 1872-1939, 'Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl,' n.d. Arch. MSS.

89 Ingenohl, op. cit., pp. 1-4.

90 Forstmeier and Breyer, Deutsche Grosskampfschiffe 1915-1918, op. cit., p. 14 n. 2.

91 Otto Groos, Der Krieg zur See, Der Krieg in der Nordsee, vol. i, (Berlin, 1922), Tables 3 and 4.

92 N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy CB1182(C), op. cit., pp. 16-18. See also P.R.O., Adm 116/940B, op. cit., p. 2.

Recent published accounts of the German naval rating's situation indicate his biggest problem in World War I was lack of action, not incompetence.⁹³ Hipper's own view at the beginning of the war was that the excellent training of the German sailor and a tight battle organization might compensate for British numbers and firepower if a battle was forced on the Germans.⁹⁴ Hipper also disagreed with Ingenohl's established views on smaller guns for the fleet and consistently pressed for heavier armament.⁹⁵ After Ingenohl was relieved in February 1915, Hipper succeeded in having the light cruisers rearmed with 15 cm. (5.9-inch) guns, replacing their inadequate 10 cm. (4.1-inch) guns, but there was neither time nor resources to effect armament changes in the dreadnoughts.⁹⁶

⁹³ D. Horn, ed., The Private War of Seaman Stumpf, (London, 1969), p.9. See also Herwig, op.cit., p. 197. See also Padfield, The Great Naval Race, op.cit., p. 338. See also David Woodward, The Collapse of Power, Mutiny in the High Seas Fleet, (London, 1973), pp. 34-35.

⁹⁴ Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 1/10, 6 Aug 1914.

⁹⁵ USNA, Kriegserfahrungen, op.cit., 7 July 1915, pp. 17-19, Hipper to Pohl, and Forstmeier and Breyer, op.cit., Hipper to Scheer, p.26.

⁹⁶ USNA, PG 76533/Reel 983, Admiralty Staff, File of Correspondence with Other Commands, High Seas Fleet to Admiralty Staff, 16 Oct 1915, Pohl to Holtzendorff, para 4 for Hipper's views on 15 cm. guns and approval of same. See also Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 4/16, 29 Nov 1915. See also BA/MA, F 3502/PG 67858, Projecte über Verstärkung der Armierung der kleinen und grossen Kreuzer, (Armament Improvement Projects for Light and Heavy Cruisers), July 1912-Feb 1914.

Despite the fact that professional differences existed between them, however, Hipper received good fitness reports from Ingenohl. In May 1914 he wrote of Hipper:⁹⁷

He has proved himself quite good at the training of his ships in battle service, using the same devotion to duty he showed in the scouting service with good results; as the leader of the scouting forces in the battle drills the same applies. Energetic, fresh, tenacious and progressing in an outstanding manner in the scouting service he has fulfilled his assignment well in every respect.

Hipper had the confidence of his fleet C-in-C when war began insofar as any subordinate could. This confidence was not shaken by Hipper's direction of the light forces involved in the first naval action of the war on 28 August 1914, an action alluded to previously in discussion of the Hipper-Tirpitz relationship. As early as 1 August the German fleet command suspected the British might attack and Ingenohl issued an order setting up defensive ship dispositions in the German Bight,⁹⁸ even though this was Hipper's responsibility.⁹⁹ Arthur Marder notes 'The German Official Naval History says it was a fatal error for their Naval Command to have assumed that

⁹⁷ BA/MA, Personal Akten Hipper, op.cit., Qualifications-berichte, No. 37, May 1914.

⁹⁸ Otto Groos, Der Krieg in der Nordsee, op.cit., vol.i, p. 32.

⁹⁹ Raeder, op.cit., p. 46.

the British light forces would have attacked so far from their bases without the support of heavy ships.'¹⁰⁰

According to Raeder, Ingenohl's ship dispositions were not mutually supporting and could be picked off one by one.¹⁰¹ A combination of this disposition and British reinforcement of the light forces with battle cruisers resulted in the loss of three German light cruisers and a torpedoboat. Rear Admiral Leberecht Maas, flag officer, torpedoboats, was lost along with 1,200 officers and men killed, wounded or missing. Despite the losses, Hipper did not record any misgivings over Ingenohl though he labelled the 28th of August 'a terrible day for us.'¹⁰² As a result of the lessons learned, ship dispositions were changed and outlying mine fields substituted. At least four capital ships would be stationed outside the Jade bar for the rest of the war and all capital ships would be held at two hours' steaming notice.¹⁰³

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Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 53.

101

Raeder, op. cit., p. 47.

102

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/19, 28 Aug 1914.

103

BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62446, K.T.B. der B.d.A., Befehl für Tagesicherung/Nachtsicherung der B.d.A., (War Diary, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, Order for Day and Night Security), 3 Sept 1914 and monthly thereafter for rest of the war.

Hipper's analysis of the action included these points: the German light cruisers had advanced far too rapidly in response to the signal of enemy destroyers in the Bight; if a similar situation occurred in the future they were to fall back on the guns of Heligoland fortress and 'this would prevent the English from achieving anything;' again, if a similar situation should occur, the arrival of English battle cruisers would not necessarily mean a fleet action. Hipper also concluded from the action of 28 August that the loss of one of his battle cruisers, if damaged, was probable in an action in the Bight. Finally, he surmised the first fleet engagement would take place off Heligoland Island in the German Bight,¹⁰⁴ an area roughly bounded by the Denmark Peninsula to the east, the German and Dutch coasts to the south, and approximately 150 miles to the west and north into the North Sea.

Ingenohl agreed, stating 'it would be good to be ready for such actions.'¹⁰⁵ In perspective, the threat of such action kept the Germans thinking defensively although the British had no intention of attacking with

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BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62446/Reel 107, K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., 29 Aug 1914, 'Lage am 29.VIII. nach dem gestrigen Vorstoss der Engländer', (Situation on 28 Aug after yesterday's attack by the English); see BA/MA, F 4059/PG 64734/Reel 460, Kr. Op. Nordsee 8 Seegefecht bei Helgoland 28.8.1914 (War Operation North Sea 8, Sea Battle off Heligoland, 28 Aug 1914).

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Ingenohl, op. cit., p. 12.

their fleet.¹⁰⁶ They tried another raid with light forces on 10 September but this time the Germans were ready: Hipper had mined the Bight and withdrawn the vulnerable advance patrol lines only the day before¹⁰⁷ and the British, presented with no targets and a dangerous mine field, withdrew.¹⁰⁸

In addition to the 28th of August engagement, Hipper was involved in three other actions and much planning activity under Ingenohl. One such plan was submitted in late September 1914 and called for Hipper to take his three battle cruisers in support of the auxiliary minelayer Berlin and attack the northern British blockade line in the North Sea.¹⁰⁹ The operation had the Kaiser's approval but the battle cruiser sortie was postponed due to machinery troubles¹¹⁰ and the operation was later cancelled because strong British forces were found to be operating across Hipper's planned course in the waters

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Sir Julian S. Corbett, Naval Operations, vol. i, To the Battle of the Falklands, (London, 1920), p. 123. See also Marder, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 53.

107

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/25, 9 Sept 1914. See also K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., 8 Sept 1914, for the order.

108

A. J. Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 54-55.

109

Otto Groos, Der Krieg in der Nordsee, vol. ii, Von Anfang September bis November 1914, (Berlin, 1922), p. 66.

110

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/23-24, 4 Sept 1914. See also K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., 4 Sept 1914.

off Norway.¹¹¹ Berlin was sent without support, evaded Jellicoe's fleet and blockade forces, and laid a mine field which sank H.M.S. Audacious, a British super-dreadnought. By the beginning of October, it was becoming increasingly obvious the war would be a long one. The Kaiser ordered his senior naval officers to convene and discuss their overall situation.¹¹² They did so aboard S.M.S. Friedrich der Grosse, the fleet flagship, on 3 October 1914. Attending were Admirals Ingenohl, Fleet C-in-C, Hugo von Pohl, Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Wilhelm von Lans, Chief of the First Battle Squadron, Reinhard von Scheer, Chief of the Second Battle Squadron, and Rear-Admiral Funke, Chief of the Third Battle Squadron. Hipper did not attend. At the meeting it was decided to continue defensive Kleinkrieg strategy and not use the fleet.¹¹³ All other admirals were informed of this decision on 5 October¹¹⁴ and the Kaiser issued an order the next day.¹¹⁵ Hipper recorded the order and in the same entry was content to glory in the Army's successes ashore.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Groos, op. cit., pp. 80-81. See also Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/29, 22 Sept 1914. Cf. Admiral Viscount Jellicoe, op. cit., pp. 132-134.

¹¹² Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 124.

¹¹³ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/33, 5 Oct 1914. See also Groos, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 93-94.

¹¹⁴ Nachlass Hipper, loc. cit.

¹¹⁵ Tirpitz, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 125-126. See also Groos, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 97.

¹¹⁶ Nachlass Hipper, loc. cit.

In carrying out the Kleinkrieg or 'little war' strategy offensive minelaying operations had to be undertaken. The Fleet C-in-C thought minelayers should be protected by strong surface craft and that a large-scale operation might bring the British fleet down on German mines or torpedoes.¹¹⁷ Ingenohl proposed a major operation off the English coast, noting that fleet morale and readiness would be improved by an offensive sortie under real war conditions.¹¹⁸ The operation was approved by the Admiralty Staff in Berlin and the Kaiser in grand headquarters; he specified that airship and aircraft scouting were to be used to assure the fleet would not be surprised or cut off.¹¹⁹

The concept of mining and bombarding the British coast began to take shape on 26 October 1914 when Hipper wrote the first of three drafts for the operation.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Groos, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 257. See also Ingenohl, op. cit., p. 23.

¹¹⁸ Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 156-157, Ingenohl to Tirpitz, 9 Nov 1914. See also Groos, *ibid*, loc. cit. Ingenohl, op. cit., p. 24.

¹¹⁹ Tirpitz, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 147. See also Groos, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 259.

¹²⁰ BA/MA, F 4061/PG 64758/Reel 406, Kr. Op. Nordsee 24 Flottenunternehmung gegen die englische Küste, 2 Bd. 2.11.1914-3.11.1914, (War Operation North Sea 24 Fleet Operation Against the English Coast). See O-Sache (Draft 1) in handschrift.

Strangely, Hipper's biographer did not credit him with this planning.¹²¹

Eventually, from Hipper's drafts War Plan 19 evolved and was cleared by the Fleet C-in-C and other cognizant authorities. Basically, it was a minelaying operation by cruisers of the Second Scouting Group. They would go in under cover of darkness, lay their mines by day-break, and steam back to Germany. Hipper's First Scouting Group was to stand by off the coast and out of sight; its mission was to deal with superior enemy forces, light or heavy, should the minelaying cruisers need support. A division of torpedoboats was to escort the light cruisers and raid shipping should the opportunity arise.

At first von Ingenohl objected¹²² to Hipper's plan because a hospital was in the direct line of fire of the coastal batteries and a stray projectile might have terrible consequences. But this factor apparently had not worried Hipper in devising the plan, possibly because the British recently had captured a German hospital ship sent out to rescue the survivors of four torpedoboats sunk in the English Channel. What did concern him as a commander

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Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/41, 28 Oct 1914.

was the question of keeping his torpedoboats in an area that had just been mined.¹²³ He preferred to send them hunting for merchant ships. A fleet conference was held on 28 October 1914 to evaluate War Plan 19 and two changes were made: the torpedoboat division was dropped from the plan because of the danger of running onto German mines and the bombardment of Great Yarmouth by the First Scouting Group was added to the original minelaying operation.¹²⁴ Ingenohl also decided the range from the firing ships to Great Yarmouth was to be kept as great as possible, in deference to the town's hospital.¹²⁵

Final corrections to the plan, issued on 2 November, provided for the minelaying to be carried out at dawn and the bombardment executed shortly thereafter. The German caution regarding their torpedoboats proved wise indeed: the British lost the submarine D-5 on one of their own mines.¹²⁶

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BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62447, K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., 0 Sache, Kriegsaufgabe 19, Aufgabe der I.B.d.A., K.d.H. (Operations Orders, War Plan 19, Reconnaissance Forces Appendix, High Seas Fleet Command), 28 Oct 1914.

124 BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62447/Reel 107, op. cit., K.d.H., Abänderungen zu Gg. 2615 0 vom 29 Okt 1914, (War Diary of the B.d.A., High Seas Fleet, Command Correction Sheet) 2 Nov 1914, p. 23. See also Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/41, 30 Oct 1914.

125 Nachlass Hipper, 1/42, 2 Nov 1914. See also supra, Anlage I.B.d.A., Gg1110 A1 vom 31 October 1914.

126 Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, The Naval Memoirs, vol. i, (London, 1934), p. 132.

It is well to note that Hipper was ordered to develop the plan for the Great Yarmouth operation even though he lacked the formal preparation of an Admiralty Staff officer in formulating operational plans.¹²⁷ War Plan 19 was, however, detailed, it defined the tasks of all participants, and it disseminated available intelligence, for example that the British First Fleet would not be in the area and some enemy light forces could be expected. It is also noteworthy that the German fleet had never practiced such an operation in peacetime manoeuvres¹²⁸ and what experience it did have, indicated that battle cruisers and light cruisers did not operate well at night in close company.¹²⁹ Therefore

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See n. 27 Part I of this work for Hipper's Admiralty Staff training of 17 days in 1897. See also Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/41, 27 Oct 1914.

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BA/MA, F 728/PG 65709-65728, Reichsmarineamt, Akten Schlachtflotte (Hochseeflotte) Jun 1903-Nov 1918, (Papers of the Active Battle Fleet, later High Seas Fleet, Imperial Naval Office), op. cit. See also F 728/PG 65702-65705, Reichsmarineamt, Akten betr. die Hochseeflotte, (Papers Concerning the High Seas Fleet) 1908-1915, op. cit. See also BA/MA, F 33031f/PG 66707-66711, Marine-Kabinett, Organisation der Seestreitkräfte, (Naval Cabinet Papers Concerning the Organization of Naval Forces), Jun 1891-Aug 1918, op. cit. All three collections contain most of the manoeuvre reports for the Imperial navy.

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BA/MA, K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., loc. cit., 2 Nov 1914.

Hipper provided a different, more open night steaming formation for the approach to the British coast. He saw to it that everyone who had a part in the operation was properly informed of War Plan 19.

The bombardment of Great Yarmouth on 3 November 1914 was Hipper's 'baptism of fire' since on 28 August he had arrived in the battle area two hours after the British had left and was occupied in searching for survivors, not combat. Great Yarmouth provided a real test not only of Hipper as a naval commander; it provided a real test of the organization and combat effectiveness of Hipper's forces under wartime conditions. He wrote that '...the operation has been ordered and will be carried out, with the help of God.'¹³⁰ He was on his way to being recognized as a commander.

The operation itself was carried out successfully and the German official history makes much of British redistribution of old battleships for coastal defence after the action. Nonetheless, there were some notable problems: the weather was such that navigation had to be done on dead-reckoning for most of the voyage thereby forcing Hipper to wait an hour on his approach to Yarmouth for the tide to rise at Smith Knoll lightship,¹³¹ the

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/42, 30 Oct 1914.

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Ibid, 1/43, 3 Nov 1914.

minelaying took longer than expected because the cruisers had to be sure of position, and there were fire discipline difficulties in driving off coastal defence forces.¹³²

Seydlitz, Hipper's flagship, hoisted the signal to open fire on a small gunboat and two destroyers coming out to attack the German formation. This signal was misinterpreted by other ships in his force, all four of which opened fire on the three small targets. Hipper momentarily lost control and the enemy escaped; he severely chastised his captains in the after-action report and the conference which followed the bombardment. Hipper's forces departed the English coast in time to avoid attack by the British submarine force which sortied.

In his war diary, Hipper made five pertinent comments:

- 1) identification of fishing craft in the Channel and North Sea was difficult in terms of either nationality or intentions;
- 2) anti-submarine nets in the waters off Yarmouth precluded successful U-boat approach to that port;
- 3) only obsolete naval craft were found in the vicinity of Yarmouth;
- 4) previous reports on locations of English coastal mine fields were correct, and
- 5) navigational aids had either been removed or changed.¹³³

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BA/MA, K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., Bemerkungen zur Unternehmung am 3. November, (War Diary of the B.d.A., Remarks on the Operation of 3 Nov), 12 Nov 1914, p. 31.

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BA/MA, K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., 3 Nov 1914.

Hipper's expectation that the 'bombardment itself will have a tremendous impact as it is to be carried out in such close proximity to the Thames estuary'¹³⁴ rated the British historical rejoinder that it was '...an operation of no military significance whatever.'¹³⁵ And indeed the aims of the fleet commander, Ingenohl, were more internal than external in ordering the raid: he needed to raise his own fleet's morale.¹³⁶ Indicative of Ingenohl's lack of success in this regard is the diary of Seaman Stumpf which makes no mention of the 1914 Yarmouth bombardment.¹³⁷ Actually, the raid was criticized within the German navy. For example, Admiral Paul Behncke, deputy Chief of the Admiralty Staff, questioned expenditure of so many armour-piercing shells against non-naval targets¹³⁸ and his chief, Admiral Pohl, not only concurred but wrote a criticism of the raid to the Fleet C-in-C. Ingenohl replied on 20 November and asserted Hipper had fired only 40 rounds of heavy ammunition per ship and most of that at the attacking light ships, not land targets. He also

¹³⁴ BA/MA, K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., 2 Nov 1914.

¹³⁵ Corbett, op. cit., vol. i, p. 265.

¹³⁶ Ingenohl, op. cit., p. 24.

¹³⁷ See D. Horn (ed), The Private War of Seaman Stumpf, op. cit., p. 4 n.1 for origin of the diary included in vol. x of the proceedings of the Reichstag Investigating Committee on Germany's collapse in World War I.

¹³⁸ BA/MA, F 4060, op. cit., Rear Admiral Paul Behncke to Admiral Hugo von Pohl, 13 Nov 1914.

admitted the battle cruisers did not have high explosive ammunition for their main armament and submitted it would be a good idea to so equip them. Ingenohl repeated his defence of the operation on grounds of improving morale.¹³⁹

To some extent the military objectives of improved fleet readiness and disruption of British coastal trade were achieved but the latter was too limited to cause more than temporary damage. Hipper had hoped that part of the British fleet might be brought to action and damaged but since the results were so meagre, he said he would not wear the Iron Cross he had been awarded. However, he approved of the other awards 'for the sake of the navy.'¹⁴⁰

Hipper was not the only officer disappointed with the operation's results; Tirpitz decided Ingenohl's leadership was severely wanting and claimed Rear Admirals Behncke, deputy chief of the Admiralty Staff, and Eckermann, fleet chief of staff, agreed. Tirpitz raised the question of Ingenohl's replacement in an interview with von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet, in an interview on 8 November, proposing von Pohl but von Müller thought he was even less suitable. Tirpitz said even Captain Adolph von Trotha, a fleet activist, favoured von Pohl but von Müller disagreed.¹⁴¹¹⁴²

¹³⁹ BA/MA, F 4060/PG 64754/Reel 406, op.cit., Kommando der Hochseestreitkräfte an den Chef des Admiralstabs der Marine im Grossen Hauptquartier, (High Seas Fleet Command to Chief, Admiralty Staff, at Grand Hdqtrs.), Ingenohl to Pohl, 20.11.1914.

¹⁴⁰ Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 1/44, 3 Nov and 1/46, 15 Nov 1914.

¹⁴¹ Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol.ii, op.cit., pp.148-9, 152-4, 162-3.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 154. See also Görlitz, op.cit., p. 43.

Ingenohl was to remain Fleet C-in-C until January 1915. Hipper, meanwhile, advocated a change in fleet strategy as it was apparent to him that Kleinkrieg would not succeed in drawing the enemy into a German trap. He forwarded to Admiral Ingenohl a suggestion from one of¹⁴³ his captains, Max Hahn, of the battle cruiser von der Tann, namely, that the newest battle cruisers be used in the Atlantic in cruiser warfare. Captain Hahn had argued that there was no way to force England into a decisive battle on German terms using the present Kleinkrieg strategy, that operations with heavy ships in the North Sea were severely limited because of the danger of underwater attack, that German trade had been cut off from the world by relatively weak forces and that to destroy blockade lines would not free German trade. Hahn also said the destruction of English trade in the Atlantic might bring England to the peace table, thereby certainly affecting the land war. Hahn submitted his ideas to Hipper on 6 November 1914, three days after returning from the bombardment of Great Yarmouth.

Hipper took Hahn's two-page proposal and expanded it into a strategical plan of operations before forwarding it

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BA/MA, F 149/PG 74106/Reel 655, Kreuzerkrieg mit grosser Kreuzer Nov 1914, (Cruiser War with Battle Cruisers), Captain Max von Hahn to Hipper, 6 Nov 1914.

to von Ingenohl. Since Hipper has never been credited¹⁴⁴ with this position on Atlantic cruiser warfare, his position is quoted in its entirety:

Flag Officer Scouting Forces Wilhelmshaven 12 Nov 1914
Most Secret

Operations Proposal

A proposal from Captain Hahn concerning the feasibility of undertaking cruiser warfare in the Atlantic with the newest battle cruisers is hereby forwarded to the Chief of the High Seas Fleet.

My position is as follows:

1) The occupation of the Channel coast and the concomitant threat this would imply to England would greatly facilitate the decision as to whether the newest battle cruisers should be sent into the Atlantic for prosecution of cruiser warfare as the author of the proposal argues, viz. for the rest of the war. Following this logic, we would have to avoid any major planned landing in force in England as the whole High Seas Fleet would be needed for security of the landing forces since the British, following their policy of avoiding action, will have their whole fleet ready to oppose such action on our part; nonetheless, carrying out of cruiser war with the battle cruisers in the Atlantic remains the one way in which our High Seas fighting ships can damage the enemy and thereby justify their existence.

2) Independent of the result of the eventual decision on an extended deployment of the battle cruisers in the Atlantic, I believe it to be a necessity for the Admiralty Staff to work up contingency plans for doing this now and to make other preparations insofar as this is possible.

Cf. Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp. 130 ff. See also Paul Kennedy, 'The Development of German Naval Operations plans against England, 1896-1914,' English Historical Review, Jan 1974, pp. 48-76. See Groos, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 278-279. See also Groos, vol. iii, op. cit., p. 249; he credits Tirpitz. See also A.J. Marder, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 342-377.

If the deployment is decided upon, I would unquestionably assign the four newest battle cruisers if their coal bunkering could be raised in some manner. Further, as to the conduct of commerce war itself, I recommend the collateral mission of the destruction of cruisers protecting commerce and the cruisers which are used to hunt down our armed merchant raiders. To do this, we must hit first with overwhelming superiority so as to destroy the enemy cruiser as quickly as possible and on the other hand also keep the battle cruisers as intact as possible for the nearly inevitable decisive battle which will occur elsewhere with newer English battle cruisers.

The coal supply of a great power is something of an advantage as they are not likely to be surprised coaling in a neutral harbour; however, if the necessity arises it would not be difficult to surprise them and coal by force of arms in English bases at least once.

3) I believe the recommendation of Captain Hahn should be followed in this question (of Atlantic cruiser raids). It should be possible to conduct opportune engagement of cruisers combined with the execution of commerce warfare in a large area according to a defined plan and thereby keep the enemy in the dark.

4) I believe the West Indies and the South Atlantic the most suitable operations areas for battle cruiser operations. The Admiralty Staff must decide the best way overseas, based on their knowledge of coaling possibilities. Perhaps it would be practicable to proceed--after coaling in one of the U-boat anchorages in the northwest coast of Iceland--and a further coaling in Canada, simultaneously attacking the coast--to the West Indies along the American coast. Everything indicates to me that coaling in U-boat anchorages in Icelandic waters would not remain undiscovered very long; nonetheless the detailing of coaling steamers to such areas should not be overlooked.

5) The author (Hahn) has chosen good solutions from the war experiences for ways to increase the cruiser endurance. The possibilities of the voyage could be greatly increased by giving the ships blisters for the required coal on the first part of of the voyage.

6) The possibility of a shorter sortie into the Atlantic with cruisers has also been suggested to me. The rationale for this appears considerably less favourable than that for the longer deployment. In the former case, the operations area would be only one hundred miles off the English-Irish coast. Using a most economical speed of 15 knots, the coal supply would only be enough to go about 500 miles west of the Hebrides via the Iceland Faeroes passage, or the general area of the southern exit to the Irish Sea and return. Also, in the process of getting there, the position and strength of the cruisers would almost certainly be known at a very early time in the operation, and consequently a powerful opposition force would have to be reckoned with on the return passage; the high speed needed in the chase would require great reserves of coal. Refueling at an anchorage in Iceland is out of the question because of the probability of early discovery at the beginning of the mission anyway, and any stop would severely reduce the possibility of an undiscovered breakthrough. There remains the question of coaling in one of the northern Norwegian fiords (north of Trondheim) as it is rumoured the Shetlands-Norway blockade line coals there.

(s) Hipper¹⁴⁵

In his cover letter to the Chief of the Admiralty Staff and the State Secretary of the Imperial Naval Office, von Ingenohl recommended that the U-boat be allowed a chance to prove itself before substantial surface forces were committed to commerce warfare. However, Ingenohl also said he recognized the advantages which Hipper's strategy entailed as well as the risks. Ingenohl saw the advantages including impact on the land war by the isolation of Britain; a possible link-up between the

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BA/MA, F 146/PG 74106, op. cit., loc. cit., Hipper to Ingenohl, 12 Nov 1914.

cruisers deployed from the High Seas Fleet and the East Asia Cruiser Squadron under Count Spee; and the alternative offered by cruiser warfare to U-boat warfare should the enemy develop adequate defence. The disadvantages, Ingenohl said, included the inherent problems for the German fleet minus battle cruisers and scouting forces should an engagement with the British fleet take place.¹⁴⁶

Hipper's operations proposal and von Ingenohl's comments were sent on to Admiral von Pohl, chief of the Admiralty Staff, and Admiral von Tirpitz, State Secretary of the Imperial Naval Office. The positions of both men on naval strategy in this period are well documented. Admiral von Pohl adhered to the basic premise of a 'fleet-in-being' in no less than five letters¹⁴⁷ to various naval personages (including the Fleet C-in-C) from August to November 1914. Pohl preferred the U-boat warfare recommended by von Ingenohl in any case and his last act as Chief of the Admiralty Staff was to authorize its unlimited prosecution.¹⁴⁸

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BA/MA, *ibid*, op. cit., Ingenohl to Pohl, 14 Nov 1914.

147

See Pohl, op. cit., p. 5, 6 Aug 1914; Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 51, 30 Aug 1914; Tirpitz, *ibid*, p. 108ff. 20 Sept 1914; Groos, Nordsee, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 84ff. for 6 Oct 1914 letter; Pohl, op. cit., p. 88, 17 Nov 1914.

148

Gemzell, op. cit., p. 184. See also Nachlass von Müller, op. cit., loc. cit. n.65 *supra*, 4 Feb 1915, also cited in Gemzell, p. 184, n.42.

In effect, this Pohl-Ingenohl agreement on U-boat warfare foredoomed Hipper's idea to the file cabinet. As to Tirpitz, at this time he was still advocating a battle fleet strategy which involved use of the battle fleet in a decisive engagement with the British Grand Fleet;¹⁴⁹ only after the battle of Dogger Bank¹⁵⁰ on 24 January 1915 did he advocate commerce warfare. In the end, Hipper's proposals were shelved until Erich Raeder, his erstwhile chief of staff, presented his 'Z-Plan' for a naval strategy based on commerce warfare to Adolf Hitler in January 1939. Raeder outlined his rationale behind the 'Z-Plan,' noting:¹⁵¹

To operate against this lifeline of commerce, in case war came, should be the primary objective of the German fleet.

This may be compared with Hipper's position as stated in the first paragraph of his proposal: '...nonetheless, carrying out of cruiser war with the battle cruisers in the Atlantic remains the one way in which our High Seas fighting ships can damage the enemy and thereby justify their existence.' Raeder continues:

¹⁴⁹ Gemzell, op. cit., loc. cit. See also Pohl, op. cit., pp. 39ff, 77ff, and Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, pp.104 ff., 111, 116, 117, 119.

¹⁵⁰ Tirpitz, Dokumente, op. cit., p. 200.

¹⁵¹ Raeder, op. cit., p. 272.

Because of Germany's lack of naval bases and her unfavourable position, hemmed in as she was by the barrier of the British Isles, these ships must have great cruising range, plus speed to prevent their being caught by stronger enemy forces.¹⁵²

This may be compared with Hipper's position as stated in the second and fifth paragraphs of his proposal: '... If the deployment is decided upon, I would unquestionably assign the four newest battle cruisers if their coal bunkering could be raised in some manner...The possibilities of the voyage could be greatly increased by giving the ships blisters for the required coal on the first part of the voyage.'

Raeder's 'Z-Plan' naval strategy included attack on British overseas trade by groups of 'battle and light cruisers as well as U-boats and auxiliary raiders.'¹⁵³ British naval intelligence speculated on the possible connection between German cruiser warfare in the first World War and in World War II noting that the German official history criticized the High Seas Fleet commander for not undertaking operations which would support the cruiser squadron under Count Spee fighting its way home

152

Raeder, op. cit., p. 272.

153

Ibid, p. 273.

from the Far East.¹⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that the author of the official German history on overseas cruiser warfare in World War I was Erich Raeder.¹⁵⁵ Ingenohl apparently considered such a move but rejected it in favour of commerce warfare by U-boats in the Atlantic, even though there was little evidence at the time that the U-boat was the panacea. U-boats had sunk 10 of the 61 ships lost by the British Empire by January 1915 and had cost the Germans 25 per cent of their total U-boat force.¹⁵⁷ Even as late as 19 January 1915, less than two weeks before Ingenohl was relieved as Fleet C-in-C, he was still opposed to using cruisers in commerce warfare,¹⁵⁸ despite the fact that German surface raiders had accounted for 51 merchant ships and several men-of-war.

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M.O.D., N.I.D., Capt. Lockhard Leith, 'Review of German Cruiser Warfare,' Naval Staff Study (official unpublished, 1940), p. 5.

155

Erich Raeder, Der Kreuzerkrieg in den ausländischen Gewässern, 2 vols., in Der Krieg zur See, 1914-1918, (Berlin, 1927).

156 BA/MA, *ibid*, op. cit., Ingenohl to Pohl, 14 Nov 1914, p.2.

157 Marder, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 343.

158

BA/MA, F 431/PG 76974/Reel 1060, Schriftwechsel über O-Directiven, Oct 1914-July 1918, (Correspondence on Operational Directives), von Ingenohl to von Pohl, 19 Jan 1915.

This proposal allows Hipper to emerge as a German naval strategist. He contributed positive suggestions through official channels which might have altered the course of the war had they been adopted. He was to pursue this line of thought with Admiral von Pohl, his next commander, albeit with no greater success. Meanwhile, in November, 1914 Hipper was heavily involved in the day-to-day defence of the German Bight, in minelaying and minesweeping, and in planning the next fleet operation, the bombardment of Scarborough and Hartlepool.

War Operation 20

Ingenohl continued the 'Kleinkrieg' strategy in Hipper's next engagement with the enemy, and Hipper would be left to fend for himself because the Fleet C-in-C turned the fleet around and left him without support in the face of a superior enemy force.

The strategical purpose of War Operation 20 was to entice the British Grand Fleet or part of it from its base at Scapa Flow south to within range of German underwater weapons. This was to be done by an attack on the British east coast which would precipitate an outcry from the populace for more protection, or so the Germans thought. At the same time mines were to be laid off Scarborough and Hartlepool to interfere with British coastal shipping.

Again, Hipper was involved in the planning. He was principally responsible for the operations order and the original in the archives is in Hipper's own hand.¹⁵⁹ Unlike Yarmouth, the bombardment was directed at two stronger and more important targets: Hartlepool had a reasonably large harbour and coastal defence works and Scarborough had a coast guard station and light coastal defence artillery.

There were two crises in War Operation 20 for Hipper, the first of which led to a professional falling-out between Hipper and Ingenohl. According to the operations plan, Ingenohl was to steam out to the middle of the Dogger Bank and stay there until Hipper finished the bombardment of Scarborough and Hartlepool and also the mining of their coastal waters. Hipper carried out the bombardment and mining despite the opposition of local light forces which he dispersed with a few well-placed broadsides. However, two hours before Hipper commenced his bombardment operation Ingenohl turned the High Seas Fleet around short of the rendezvous point and headed for Wilhelmshaven without signalling Hipper. The turn was contrary to the operations

¹⁵⁹ BA/MA, F 4061/PG 64758/Reel 443, Kr. Op. Nordsee 27 Flottenunternehmung gegen die englische Küste, 15-16.12.1914. Kriegsaufgabe 20 der Flotte, (War Operation North Sea 27, Fleet Operation Against the English Coast...War Operation 20 of the Fleet).

¹⁶⁰ BA/MA, F 3820/PG 62447, O-Sache Kriegsaufgabe 20, 25 Nov 1914, p. 2.

plan which stated that Ingenohl was to wait in the rendezvous position until 'signalled by the B.d.A. that the operation was complete.'¹⁶¹ Ingenohl turned the fleet around at 0710 whereas Hipper did not complete the bombardment until 0937, about 45 minutes later than he expected. Foul weather and a British destroyer attack had delayed Hipper; as Marder says, 'Room 40 achieved its first great success on the evening of 14 December, when it pieced together from German naval messages a plan for an offensive operation by all five of the battle cruisers... with light cruisers and destroyers, directed against the British coast.'¹⁶²

Because of this British intelligence coup and Ingenohl's abandonment of the plan Hipper was nearly intercepted and brought to action with an overwhelming force on his way home. According to Marder, 'The (British) Navy had an excellent opportunity to cut off the raiding force. Four battle cruisers and six dreadnoughts stood between Hipper and his bases.'¹⁶³ But a combination of circumstances

161

Ibid, loc. cit., cf. Hipper's critique in BA/MA, F 4061/PG 64758, op. cit., p. 4.

162

Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 134.

163

Ibid, p. 138.

allowed Hipper to escape and frustrated British pursuit:
 bad weather, good scouting by Hipper's light forces,¹⁶⁴ an
 Admiralty order to Vice Admiral Sir George Warrender,
 C-in-C Second Battle Squadron, to avoid going too far to
 the east as the German fleet was out and his deputy's fail-¹⁶⁵
 ure to open fire when sighting German warships off his bow.¹⁶⁶
 Hipper described his escape crisis as follows:¹⁶⁷

16.12.14 Signal from Stralsund: 'Enemy heavy force
1239 in quadrant 93B. Being chased southwest by
 south.'

As the situation developed, operations were shifted to the support of the small cruisers which were attempting to escape the enemy by going on a southwest by south course and thence drawing away to the southeast. Course was changed to southeast by south, speed 23 knots.

1332 ...Because Stralsund signalled the enemy out of sight and in response to further inquiries it was clear no light cruiser was in danger, course was changed to north by east...

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In his personal war journal Hipper wrote:

...About 1200 I received a signal from Stralsund that the enemy capital ships were practically on top of her and she was making off to the southwest. Now came the difficult decision: should I come to her aid and thereby send my cruisers into certain action, or should I turn away to the north and escape? I decided on the first alternative.

¹⁶⁴ K.T.B. der B.d.A., op.cit., 16 Dec 1914, entries for 1239, 1258, 1311, 1332, and 1355.

¹⁶⁵ P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, Admiralty to Warrender, 16 Dec 1914, 2.25 PM, p. 275.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, op. cit., p. 276.

¹⁶⁷ K.T.B. der B.d.A., op. cit., loc. cit.

¹⁶⁸ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 2/6, 16 Dec 1914.

Hipper turned south towards the enemy. It is doubtful whether he knew the High Seas Fleet was already on its way back to the Jade but this in no way denegrates his action; his willingness to engage a battle squadron is a remarkable testament to his fortitude. But he was not foolhardy; Hipper suspected¹⁶⁹ he was in the presence of 10 enemy warships, not 6, because his advance cruiser screens engaged the advance screen of another force. The light cruiser Grauden¹⁶⁹ signalled another formation of enemy heavy ships south of the first sighted by Stralsund. Meanwhile, the 18th Half Flotilla confirmed the strength and location of the first body of ships as did Grauden for the second force. Hipper therefore turned north, believing he would draw the heavy ships off the light cruisers which is in fact what happened. The weather worsened and he passed the bows of Warrender's squadron about 1550 German time, noting that the northerly course would give him 'the advantage of darkness and silhouette the enemy'¹⁷⁰ should he have to fight.

Hipper noted in his official report on the action that the Stralsund and her consorts were not fired upon when first sighted by the British because they gave the proper recognition signal. The Kaiser's marginal comment on this phase was 'Very Good!'¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ BA/MA, F 4061/PG 64758/Reel 443, op. cit., Hipper to Ingenohl, 17 Dec 1916, after-action report, p. 12.

¹⁷⁰ Hipper to Ingenohl, ibid, p. 13.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 11.

Hipper also noted in his official report 'the fleet did not remain in its supporting position until signalled by the B.d.A. the operation was complete as required in the plan.' Nor did Ingenohl's turn escape the attention of Tirpitz who said about three weeks later:¹⁷²

...On December 16th Ingenohl had the fate of Germany in the palm of his hand. I boil with inward emotion whenever I think of it.

Similarly, Admiral Scheer commanding the Second Battle Squadron at the time, wrote in his work on the High Seas Fleet in 1919, 'Our premature turning on to an east south-east course had robbed us of the opportunity of meeting certain divisions of the enemy according to the prearranged plan, which was now seen to have been correct.'¹⁷³

In defending the turn, Ingenohl said he wished to avoid a night destroyer action; a possible engagement with superior British heavy forces (based on the evidence of substantial British wireless traffic intercepted after the operation began) and that the British forces located in the Channel at the time were superior to his own forces.¹⁷⁴ Ingenohl believed the 10 British capital ships in the Channel were superior to the 24 he had available--14 dreadnoughts, 6 pre-dreadnoughts, and 4 battle cruisers.

¹⁷² Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 496.

¹⁷³ Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, op. cit., pp. 71-72. See also Corbett, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 44.

¹⁷⁴ Ingenohl, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

Conference records indicate tremendous disappointment in the Fleet C-in-C and substantiate Hipper's comment there was much rancor among the fleet officers.¹⁷⁵

In terms of the actual military objectives of War Plan 20, the action against Scarborough and Hartlepool was successful in luring a substantial portion of the Grand Fleet into a position where it could be damaged by German forces, as Hipper had planned. The Naval Staff Monograph written by the British Admiralty sums up the seriousness of the affair for Great Britain:¹⁷⁶

Here at last were the conditions for which the Germans had been striving since the outbreak of the war. A few miles away from the port bow of the High Seas Fleet, isolated, and several hours steaming from home was the most powerful, homogeneous battle squadron of the Grand Fleet, the destruction of which, would at one blow, have accomplished the process of attrition and placed the British and German fleets on a precisely even footing as regards numerical strength.

Hipper's own comment dealt with reality, not possibility.¹⁷⁷
He noted these lessons for future operations:

Any future sorties should be in total darkness so as to remain undetected by submarines; if the Fleet was to support advanced forces it must remain close enough to prevent those forces being overwhelmed and provide support; patrol of the outer German Bight by fishing steamers was a waste of time.

¹⁷⁵ BA/MA, F 4061/PG 64761/Reel 443, op.cit., 'Besprechung der Kriegsaufgabe 20' Gg. 20 Dec 1914. Cf. Nachlass Hipper, 277, 22 Dec 1914.

¹⁷⁶ Naval Staff Monograph, No. 28, (Admiralty, Official Unpublished, 1925), p.101; see Marder, vol.ii, op.cit., p.136, n.6.

¹⁷⁷ BA/MA, F 3820, op.cit., K.T.B. der B.d.A., loc.cit.

Some three weeks after the completion of the actions associated with War Plan 20, Hipper confided in Magnus von Levetzow, captain of the battle cruiser Moltke, that he 'felt overburdened with responsibility.'¹⁷⁸ On the surface, such a confidence appears inconsequential but in light of what followed assumes considerable importance. Despite the fact it was fleet policy for the B.d.A. to develop a 'tight personal bond' with his captains,¹⁷⁹ Hipper was the object of a campaign by Levetzow to have him retired on the alleged basis of ill health. Levetzow's motive, however, appears to have been a professional difference between himself and Hipper concerning use of the High Seas Fleet. Levetzow was in favour of a more aggressive use of the fleet, whatever the price,¹⁸⁰ than Hipper. Captain Levetzow began his intrigues against Hipper with a letter to Admiral von Holtzendorff dated 15 January 1915 in which he asserted Hipper was 'physically and psychologically at the end of his tether' and that 'the most senior of us commanders fear for our safety as he (Hipper) trusts too much to his chief of staff' (Raeder).¹⁸¹ Holtzendorff at

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M.O.D., Admiralty, Nachlass Magnus von Levetzow, Levetzow to Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff, 15 Jan 1915, Reel 43, Frame 00941.

179 BA/MA, F 33041f, op. cit., PG 66710, von Ingenohl to Tirpitz, Kiel, 21 Apr 1913.

180 Herwig, op. cit., p. 177 for Levetzow. Cf. with Hipper's view p. 179.

181 Nachlass von Levetzow, op. cit., loc. cit.

the time was retired ~~but~~ in September 1915 was recalled to head the Admiralty Staff until August 1918. Hipper was not as ill as Levetzow believed, although he had said that he did feel depressed when he was on board Levetzow's ship on the 15th of November. On 31 December Hipper noted in his Nachlass he had some bursitis or¹⁸² arthritis. And it is interesting to note Hipper's other captains did not 'fear' for their safety because of what he entrusted to Raeder; Levetzow's Nachlass does not include letters from either Max von Hahn or Maurice von Egidy to this effect.¹⁸³ Hipper's trust in his chief of staff was substantive but not blind. Raeder says:

...as commander of the Scouting Forces, he (Hipper) had to put up with the reports and suggestions of a large staff. At first he seemed to think that the staff was putting up to him matters which they could have handled themselves, but as the smooth working group gained his confidence, complete cooperation and teamwork was established. This was expedited by Admiral Hipper's natural politeness and good nature, which soon made amends for any harshness when he lost his temper, as he occasionally did on the bridge. At these times he was likely to tell the offender off in crisp, trenchant Bavarian.¹⁸⁴

182

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/46, 17 Nov 1914; 2/9, 31 Dec 1914.

183

Nachlass von Levetzow, op. cit., Briefe und Schriftsachen, vols. ii-xi, Reels 43, 44.

184

Raeder, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

Holtzendorff was not impressed with Levetzow's communication and said the letter had aged him 10 years. He reminded Levetzow that von Pohl, Chief of the Admiralty Staff, thought highly of Hipper as a commander¹⁸⁵ and he ignored the ploy for Hipper's removal. But Levetzow continued to correspond with Holtzendorff over the next 18 months, and also intrigued with Admiral von Lans, a hero of the Boxer Rebellion who had retired from command of the First Battle Squadron, after Dogger Bank, to Berlin, ostensibly for reasons of ill health. The correspondence was an attempt to effect changes in the fleet command including Hipper's retirement.¹⁸⁶ This ambition on the part of Levetzow was nearly fulfilled when Admiral Reinhard Scheer, C-in-C of the High Seas Fleet, wrote a letter to Admiral Georg von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet, on 15 April 1916 submitting Hipper be retired for ill health. But von Holtzendorff, who had to forward Scheer's letter, recommended Hipper be retained.¹⁸⁷ And again, von Müller decided it was best to keep Hipper, as he had also decided 15 months previously.

185

Nachlass von Levetzow, op. cit., Holtzendorff to Levetzow, 7 Feb 1915, Reel 43, Frame 00448.

186

Op. cit., Admiral von Lans to Levetzow, 22 Dec 1915, Reel 43, Frames 00646 ff.

187

BA/MA, Personal Akten Admiral Franz von Hipper, Scheer to von Holtzendorff to von Müller, 15 Apr 1916, pp. 41-42.

Levetzow had even attempted to get the loyal Maurice von Egidy of Seydlitz, Hipper's flag captain, to acquiesce in Hipper's removal but Egidy replied that 'Hipper is perfectly satisfactory to me once he gets underway.'¹⁸⁸ And Levetzow also wrote to Hipper's personal physician in Wiesbaden whose reply is dated the same day Scheer originated his request for Hipper's retirement--15 April 1916. Dr. Königmann said 'There is nothing physically or psychologically wrong with Hipper.'¹⁸⁹ Levetzow received this letter at his home address in Berlin.

Hipper, however, apparently was unaware of this campaign as he said in January 1916 that he was losing one of his best commanding officers to fleet staff: Magnus von Levetzow!¹⁹⁰ It is possible he learned of it later, though, for there is no congratulatory letter from Hipper to Levetzow when the latter was awarded the Pour le Merite in October 1917. Most important officers sent one.¹⁹¹

188

Nachlass von Levetzow, op. cit., Capt. von Egidy to Levetzow, 1 Jan 1916, Reel 43, Frame 00864.

189

Op. cit., Kuranstalt Dr. Königmann, Wiesbaden, Gartenstrasse 15, to Levetzow, 15 Apr 1916, Reel 43, Frame 00690.

190 Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 4/25, 23-26 Jan 1916.

191 Nachlass von Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 44, Frames 00124-00126.

The Battle of the Dogger Bank

On 24 January 1915 the first dreadnought battle in history was fought in the North Sea at Dogger Bank. This was Hipper's initial encounter in broad daylight and clear weather with his opposite number, Admiral Sir David Beatty. The battle occurred because the British intercepted and decoded the wireless orders which von Ingenohl had sent Hipper and the British arranged a reception. Hipper was carrying out a muddled spur-of-the-moment plan for a wide-ranging reconnaissance of the North Sea to destroy any British light craft or commerce unaccompanied by a capital ship escort. This operation was conducted in the face of foreknowledge of his plans by the enemy who would oppose him in superior force.

Hipper sortied with four battle cruisers, four light cruisers and a torpedoboat escort. He was intercepted by five British battle cruisers, six light cruisers and a large force of destroyers. In the engagement that followed, which developed on a south east course as Hipper retreated to the German Bight, Hipper lost his oldest and weakest ship, Blücher, the last ship in his battle line. The opposing forces concentrated their fire on each other's flagships; Seydlitz suffered severe damage from magazine fires and Lion's propulsion machinery was badly hit.

British communications problems in shifting command allowed Hipper to escape destruction. The British abandoned pursuit and concentrated fire on Blücher which was already sinking.

None of the basic facts above are in doubt as all of the reports from both sides are available to researchers¹⁹² and there have been numerous published interpretations and narratives of the battle. The apologia of Admirals Scheer and Jellicoe and the memoirs of Tirpitz, all published in 1919, deal with it superficially.¹⁹³ Scheer and Jellicoe both present brief narratives and Tirpitz barely mentions the action. The British official history published in 1921 is an exposition of the action from the British point of view.¹⁹⁴ The German official history deals with the operational, strategical and technical aspects of the battle as well as providing the most comprehensive narrative

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BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64771-64775/Reels 345, 346, Kr. Op. Nordsee 35 Doggerbank-Schlacht am. 24.1.1915, (War Operation North Sea 35, Battle of the Dogger Bank on 24 Jan 1915; P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, 1989, 2134, 2135, 2138, 2139, 'The Dogger Bank' 24 Jan 1915.

193

Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War, op. cit., pp. 77-86; Jellicoe, The Grand Fleet 1914-1916, op. cit., pp. 188-199; Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., p. 502.

194

Corbett, Naval Operations, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 82-103.

to date.¹⁹⁵ It does not, however, explain the rationale for Blücher accompanying Hipper on the mission. Hipper's critique of the action is only partially reproduced and that to support the writer's argument, while Tirpitz' strategy is cited prominently in the conclusions.

Tirpitz' own published documents are arranged to show that the strategical thinking behind Dogger Bank was unsound. In Dokumente vol. ii Tirpitz does not attempt a narrative; rather, he confirms his strategical observations made in his memoirs.¹⁹⁶

Hipper's biographer, Waldeyer-Hartz, covers a great deal besides the battle of Dogger Bank in the chapter¹⁹⁷ entitled 'The Dogger Bank Action.' He discusses British naval strategy, early 1915 operations, and compares it with Jutland. He cites at some length Hipper's official war diary but does not refer to Hipper's personal journal which he had previously used nor Hipper's official critique.

The standard American work on the battle of Jutland by H. H. Frost is a compact history of the war at sea and includes a brief analysis of the Dogger Bank action.¹⁹⁸

195

Groos, op. cit., vol. iii, Von Ende November 1914 bis Anfang Februar 1915, (Berlin, 1923), pp. 188-249 and Appendices 7 and 8, pp. 280-290.

196

Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol., ii, op. cit., pp. 195-208.

197

Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., pp. 142-165.

198

H. H. Frost, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

Lord Chatfield's autobiography contains a personal view of the battle with some interesting analysis, notably on the faults of German shell. Erich Raeder's²⁰⁰ autobiography, published in English in 1960, provides a unique eyewitness account of Hipper's behaviour in the battle. The most careful analysis of the Dogger Bank battle from the British viewpoint isⁱⁿ Arthur Marder's²⁰¹ magnum opus, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol.ii. Geoffrey Bennett has achieved a most balanced though less detailed picture in his work²⁰² on the naval battles of World War I. Finally, Paul Kennedy, a rising scholar in the study of the Imperial Navy, has done an essay²⁰³ on the battle. His treatment is largely from the British point of view.

Even with this extensive coverage in time and authors, there are still some questions which bear further examination. Why, for example, did Ingenohl send Hipper at all

199

Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield, The Navy and Defence, (London, 1942), pp. 131-137.

200

Erich Raeder, My Life, op. cit., pp. 53-57.

201

Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 156-175.

202

Geoffrey Bennett, Naval Battles of the First World War, (New York, 1968), pp. 159-168.

203

Bernard Fitzsimons, ed., Warships and Sea Battles of World War I, (London, 1973), 'Dogger Bank: Clash of the Battle Cruisers,' by Paul Kennedy, pp. 44-51.

in view of the small potential rewards? Why was the armoured cruiser Blücher taken along? Was this a serious professional mistake by Hipper? What was Hipper thinking when he had to decide whether or not to leave Blücher to her fate? What did the national and naval command think of Hipper's conduct of the action? What did he learn from the Dogger Bank experience? What did Hipper think of Ingenohl after the battle?

To begin with, Ingenohl believed that British fishing steamers in the North Sea constituted a substantial threat in that they could reveal his strength and movements and further restrict his operational alternatives.²⁰⁴ During the December operations against Scarborough and Hartlepool a number of British light forces had been observed in advance positions in the North Sea, and Ingenohl thought it entirely possible some of these would be out and present opportune targets for Hipper. Ingenohl's apologia written in the spring of 1918 indicates that the Kaiser had given permission for sorties of this nature and had accepted the possibility of encountering enemy heavy forces.²⁰⁵

204

BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64771/Reel 345, op. cit., Ingenohl to Pohl, 27 Jan 1915.

205

BA/MA, F 3809a/PG 62374, op. cit., Ingenohl, p. 34.

The Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral von Pohl, had also accepted the possibility of losses, according to Ingenohl,²⁰⁶ and Ingenohl had opposed taking the whole fleet on such sorties lest it have to fight a battle off the English coast. Nonetheless, the Fleet-C-in-C believed enemy light craft, that is, cruisers, and escorting destroyers, were likely to be found in the North Sea. He was enticed by favourable weather and intelligence which indicated (incorrectly)²⁰⁷ that the British battle cruiser fleet was at Scapa Flow. Other intelligence (correctly)²⁰⁸ indicated the British did have heavy forces which might try to intercept Hipper in Cromarty Firth and the Firth of Forth. But Ingenohl believed the scouting forces could outrun any battleships they met. In essence, the operation was a calculated risk, though neither Ingenohl nor Hipper realized it had been compromised by the British interception of the wireless signal from Eckermann (Fleet Chief of Staff) to Hipper. In sum, Ingenohl sent Hipper on a raid in the Dogger Bank, the object of which was to inflict loss on British light forces and to secure his freedom of action from intelligence trawlers. Ingenohl

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Ingenohl, op. cit., p. 34.

207

BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64771, op. cit., Ingenohl to Pohl, 27 Jan 1915, p. 2. Cf. Corbett, Naval Operations, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

208 Ingenohl, op. cit., loc. cit. Corbett, op. cit., loc. cit.

considered the risk small. As it turned out, it cost the Germans S.M.S. Blücher and 792 dead.

Blücher was taken along because the Germans regarded her as a relatively modern ship and because of that modernity she had served as a gunnery training ship since March, 1911. Originally conceived as an armoured cruiser, the construction department of the Imperial Naval Office considered her guns sufficient to engage an Invincible class battle cruiser. This was because the 21 cm. (8.2-inch) model 1906 turret-mounted gun had a maximum range of 19,100 meters at 30° elevation. The 30.5 cm. (12-inch) guns in S.M.S. Derfflinger had a range of 18,400 meters, some 700 meters short of targets Blücher could reach. Thus, though Blücher carried the lightest heavy calibre guns in Hipper's squadron, she carried the guns with the longest range.

209

BA/MA, F 33031f/PG 66708/Reel 511, Organisation des Seestreitkräfte, (Organization of Naval Forces), Holtzendorff to Tirpitz, 14 Jan 1911 and Tirpitz to Holtzendorff, 1 Feb 1911, 1 Mar 1911.

210

USNA, PG 66087/Reel 1501, Sitzungs-Protokolle Jan 1905-Apr 1909 B.d.4, (Records of Plenary Conferences, vol. 4), Conference concerning the Battle Cruisers of 1907, 19 Sept 1906, pp. 2-3.

211

BA/MA, F 50/66, 17, Deutsche Kriegsflotte, Grosse Kreuzer, Heft 5: Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Blücher, (Berlin, 1908), p. 11. Cf. Siegfried Breyer, Schlachtschiffe und Schlachtkreuzer, (Munich, 1970), p. 277, entries for Derfflinger, Seydlitz, Moltke, von der Tann.

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Further, German fleet organization dictated that four large ships were the minimum strength for the scouting forces. In German tactical thinking this constituted half a squadron and was believed to be a handy tactical unit. The other fact which most interpreters, including the official historian, miss almost entirely is Blücher's speed. Though not equipped with turbines she had advanced reciprocating engines and was officially capable of 25.4 knots on forced draft. Blücher was observed doing 25 knots--²¹³ by the British flagship--before being hit. At Dogger Bank, the average speed of Hipper's battle cruisers was 23 knots, the highest continuous speed they had managed off Yarmouth and Scarborough as well.²¹⁴ In short, Blücher was well able to maintain squadron speed until damaged by an engine room hit. The squadron itself was plagued with engineering difficulties: cranky condensers, steam turbine problems and poor coal. There were also training problems as well. The captain

212 BA/MA, F 33031f/PG 66708, op.cit., Holtzendorff to Tirpitz, 14 Jan 1911.

213 BA/MA, F 50/66, 17, op.cit., p. 26. See also Jane's Fighting Ships 1914, p. 129, entry for best recent speed: 26.4 knots. For Blücher's speed during the battle see P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, op.cit., Admiral Beatty's report, p. 38.

214 BA/MA, F 3913/PG 63370, K.T.B. S.M.S. Seydlitz. See signals for 3 Nov 1914, time 1045, signal for 23 knots and 16 Dec 1914, time 1250, signal for 23 knots; 24 Jan 1915, time 1218, signal for 23 knots.

of S.M.S. Seydlitz observed after the battle of Dogger Bank that the training period of the battle cruisers had allowed only a three-hour full speed trial run every year. He recommended this be changed to allow 24 hours at full power every 90 days so the crews could get used to the demands.²¹⁵

In light of the above, it appears that Marder, despite his careful analysis, has erred in asserting Blücher²¹⁶ slowed the squadron. He observes:

Tactically, the Germans had made the mistake of adding the slow Blücher to the squadron. (Ironically, she had made Hipper's escape possible). Hipper strongly recommended that in the future his battle cruisers not be handicapped in that fashion. This seems a bit ironical on his part, as the Blücher was unique.

Since Marder gives no source for Hipper's alleged recommendation, it is possible that he based his statement on Hipper's after-action report which in fact cited lack of speed as a much wider problem than just Blücher. Hipper complained that his most recently commissioned battle cruisers should be capable of more than 23 knots in formation steaming and suggested the following:

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USNA, PG 77733/Reel 1659, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., von Egidy to Hipper, 13 Mar 1915. See n.147, Part II.

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Marder, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 165.

...The difficulty of coal supply plays a major part in this. There are some things which can be done: machinery must be oil-fired from now on in new construction, and the boilers of existing ships must be modified as soon as time can be found for extended refits. (Arranged for Seydlitz). Modifications to reduce excessive smoking have already been seen as indicated by ²¹⁷ the lessons learned in the Hartlepool operation.

Blücher's design, not speed, was the real problem for her in any action with battle cruisers. Although her basic defence scheme was the modern German 'citadel' system, which protected her adequately against under-water attack, ²¹⁸ her armour was insufficient to protect her from the heavy shell carried in British battle cruisers. ²¹⁹ She was considerably weaker in protection on the water line and on armament than the three battle cruisers Hipper took along. Her horizontal armour protection was the same, however. ²²⁰ Blücher's special problem was in her midships ammunition supply arrangement. It was a lucky hit which disabled her ammunition supply

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BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64771/Reel 345, op. cit., Hipper to Ingenohl, 27 Jan 1915, op. cit., p. 4.

218

BA/MA, F 50/66, 17, op. cit., S.M.S. Blücher, pp.4-5, 7.

219

Ibidem, pp. 8-9, and plan, p. 29. Blücher's main belt armour was 180 mm., her turrets 140 mm.

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Cf., op. cit., supra with Erich Gröner, op. cit., pp. 114-118. Blücher's decks were 120 mm., von der Tann and Moltke 100 mm., Seydlitz 150 mm.

and caused a fire which knocked out 60 per cent of her main armament.²²¹ The official history's assertion that 'this hit would have been just as deadly for any one of the battle cruisers'²²² is not borne out by the fact that Blücher was uniquely vulnerable in this feature of construction. The hit mentioned above simply would not have done as much damage in the later ships because they had separate magazines. However, no German ship of the day could have withstood the concentration of fire²²³ levied against the Blücher.

As to why Hipper took Blücher along on the Dogger Bank operation, it is highly likely he was following the established tactical practice in the Imperial Navy to operate in units based on an eight-ship squadron and a four-ship division.²²⁴ In light of Blücher's ability to maintain squadron speed or exceed it, her ability to engage targets at greater range than any of Hipper's battle cruisers, her balanced modern defence system

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Paul Schmalenbach, 'S.M.S. Blücher,' Warship International (1911), pp. 171-181.

222

Groos, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 239.

223

P.R.O., Adm 137/1943, Admiral Beatty's report, op. cit., pp. 9, 13, 25, 26, 46. See also Commanding Officer, H.M.S. King Edward VII, loc. cit., 5 Feb 1915, encl. 'Information Obtained from Survivors of Blücher.'

224 Tirpitz, My Memoirs, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

against underwater and surface attack, Hipper did not make a serious professional mistake but took a calculated risk.

On abandoning Blücher when she was sinking after her subjection to overwhelming British gunfire, Hipper's personal war journal best reflects his thinking. He says:

Hit, fire amidships, was signalled from Blücher; it is put out. Then Blücher signals that her machinery has been knocked out. The ship is a wreck aft. Meanwhile, many explosions and hits on the enemy were observed. The lead ship, Lion, hit heavily, fell out of line. I signalled the torpedoboats to attack but as soon as I made the signal, the enemy swung outward and made a turn. The question before me, should I leave Blücher to her fate and take my ships out of the battle or turn around and hit the enemy with all I have? I chose the first. Had I turned around with the heavily damaged Seydlitz (armament halved), 1) I would have gone into the maw of many destroyers, 2) my own torpedoboats would be left to the tender mercies of the enemy light cruisers, 3) the near certainty of losing my remaining battle cruisers without justification would result. I therefore broke off the battle and took all my ships but Blücher home. I rendezvoused off Norderney at 3 P.M. with the First and Second Battle Squadrons which were sent to my assistance. As always, too late. ²²⁵

This personal account has not been reproduced heretofore but is similar in essence to Hipper's official account which was reproduced by his biographer. The only other view of Hipper in this crisis is contained in the published memoirs of his chief of staff, Erich Raeder:

To have stood by the Blücher any longer would have risked losing the other ships and perhaps the entire force. With a heavy heart, Admiral Hipper countermanded his order and directed a resumption of the withdrawal south-easterly toward Heligoland. Eyes blurred as the sinking Blücher disappeared in the haze astern.²²⁶

Though the naval and national high commands questioned Hipper's tactical assignment of Blücher to the end of his battle line and whether he could have saved her,²²⁷ they concluded 'Admiral Hipper conducted the whole matter quite sensibly.'²²⁸ Ingenohl said he agreed with Hipper's conduct of the action though disagreed with some of his strategical conclusions.²²⁹ Hipper recorded his own thoughts on the result of the Dogger Bank results in his personal journal:²³⁰

I have fought to the best of my knowledge and ability and have done all that is humanly possible despite the unfortunate result which I believe is the fault of the fleet.

226

Raeder, My Life, op. cit., p. 56.

227

BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64774/Reel 346, op. cit., Zenker to Pohl and Müller, 1 Feb 1915 cited in Groos, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 243.

228

Nachlass von Müller, op. cit., 4/243, 30.1.1915, cf. n. 65.

229

BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64774/Reel 346, op. cit., Ingenohl to Pohl, 29 Jan 1915, pp. 1-2.

230

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 2/16, 26 Jan 1915.

Apparently Grand Headquarters agreed as they blamed Hipper's C-in-C, von Ingenohl,²³¹ for the losses suffered at Dogger Bank and he was relieved 4 February 1915. That same day Hipper recorded his award of the Iron Cross, First Class, by the Kaiser himself.²³² On 23 February the Grand Duke of Oldenburg awarded Hipper the Duchy's highest decoration, the Friedrich August Cross, First and Second Class. And on February 26 his birthplace, the Bavarian town of Weilheim, bestowed yet another honor.²³³ Hipper wrote:

From my home city, Weilheim, I have been given a great honor. And the street from which I came has been named for me: the main street has been named Admiral Hipperstrasse.

As of November, 1972 when the writer visited Weilheim, the main street was still called after Hipper unlike the Tirpitz Ufer, in Berlin, which was renamed Reichpietsch Ufer, to honor one of the three sailors executed for mutiny in 1917.²³⁴

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BA/MA, F 4062, op. cit., Zenker to Pohl and Müller, p. 3.

232 Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., Orden und Auszeichnungen, 18 Feb 1915. Cf Nachlass Hipper which records the Kaiser's action on 4 Feb 1915, 2/20.

233

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 2/24, 26 Feb 1915.

234

David Woodward, op. cit., p. 11.

Hipper made several strategical and tactical observations in his official critique of the battle of Dogger Bank, only excerpts of which have ever been published.²³⁵ Some of Hipper's strategical observations are remarkably similar to the thinking of Churchill and Fisher, the British First Lord and First Sea Lord at the time; some of his tactics were reflected in later fleet operations. Above all, Hipper's critique illustrates what Hipper learned from the battle. The two observations which demonstrate his naval thinking most graphically are reproduced and analysed here:

General Observations

I.) The experiences of the 24.I. have shown that the North Sea can in no way be considered clear of the English Fleet. The bombardment of the East Coast has apparently resulted in their taking up positions from which they can be committed to an immediate defence of the East Coast. At least light forces will be stationed in such positions and possibly battle cruisers are stationed on the North Sea. Battleships must at least be kept in neighboring bases ready for action (Humber, Firth of Forth).

Therefore it appears to me:

1) It is again possible for us to damage the English fleet by U-boats in the North Sea.

2) All operations have to be planned so that a reserve formation is available for timely support of advanced forces. Hence the decisive battle could be developed on any occasion; in the future the fleet will (have to) stand to with its full strength of modern warships in a state of readiness to support such operations.

²³⁵ Tirpitz, Dokumente, op.cit., vol.ii, p. 196; see also Waldeyer-Hartz, op.cit., p. 154, for published excerpts. For Hipper's original text, see BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64771, Reel 345, Hipper to Ingenohl, 27 Jan 1915.

II.) The superiority of the English fleet must cause us to conduct the battle under the most favourable circumstances possible, as soon as (such a battle) is generally desired politically. That is:

1) The battle should not be sought in an easterly wind.

2) The plan must include a U-boat line which can attack before or after the battle.

3) The battle must be within our waters, not farther than 50 sea miles from Heligoland. A venture farther than 70 sea miles from Heligoland should not be allowed.

Every ship which remains at a greater distance from our coasts is easy booty for the enemy. A manoeuvre to her support would probably lead to further heavy losses. A battle in English waters would quickly bring about the loss of the German fleet without noteworthy return.

Presumably the sorties of the enemy will bring him in range of our U-boat lines and by combining this with action by our fleet a trap could be sprung. The assumption must be that the battle will be in the German Bight, that the initiative must be with us and the enemy will have no time to send his U-boats.

4) Only completely battleworthy ships should be committed to the battle; every old ship is easy prey for the enemy because of the enormous power of modern artillery; the enemy themselves will bring only first class materiel. All flotillas must be brought to their places. The older squadrons could be utilized only as floating batteries. We should not avoid the necessity of decommissioning all old ships in favour of modern battleworthy (Lützow) type ships which are the best possible weapons.

Other points in Hipper's critique included a caveat for smaller operations using only expendable materiel if no decisive battle was envisaged; another warning that the British would utilize superior speed and firepower

to develop an action at the longest possible range; an observation that feint attacks by German torpedo-boats would probably cause the British to turn at great range and single torpedoboats between opposing battle lines might go unnoticed, thus obtaining a good firing position; a suggestion that after-stacks of all German torpedoboats be painted red for recognition; a complaint that it was difficult to command from the conning tower because of smoke, especially on the windward side, and a definition of command succession in the scouting forces should he be killed or disabled: the senior captain in the battle cruisers was to take command.²³⁶

In concluding that England had not abandoned the North Sea, Hipper reversed a position he had held since the beginning of the war.²³⁷ Hipper's ideas were endorsed by his fleet C-in-C with the exception of the 50-mile range limit on distance of a battle from Heligoland; Ingenohl favoured a greater radius of action in a decisive battle.²³⁸ Admiral Pohl, Chief of the Admiralty Staff, agreed with Hipper's concept of a decisive battle and was especially adamant that

²³⁶ BA/MA, F 4062/PG 64771/Reel 345, op.cit., Hipper to Ingenohl, 27 Jan 1915, p.6.

²³⁷ Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 1/10, 1/12, 6, 12 Aug 1914.

²³⁸ BA/MA, F 4062, op. cit., loc. cit., Ingenohl to Pohl, op. cit., p. 1.

torpedoboats should take a vital part. It would be well to note that Hipper made his remarks from unique authority: he had commanded the first force of capital ships to see action under the black, white and red ensign of the Imperial German Navy. Hipper's analysis would have suited the strategy proposed by Churchill and Fisher, i.e., that the British Battle Fleet be based farther south than Scapa Flow to protect the English coast. But the British fleet commanders, Jellicoe and Beatty, prevailed. Hipper was correct to a certain degree in that some heavy forces, notably the Battle Cruiser Fleet and a squadron of pre-dreadnoughts, were stationed at Rosyth. But there were no light forces of consequence between Harwich and Rosyth after the British post-Dogger Bank fleet reorganization.²⁴⁰ The Germans tried to damage the British main battle fleet with U-boats, as²⁴¹ Hipper suggested, but despite numerous attempts in the North Sea during this period, there were no notable successes.

Hipper's awareness of the political significance of a decisive battle between the German and British fleets is important to the analysis because heretofore it has not been

²³⁹ USNA, PG 76974/Reel 1060, Admiralstab der Marine, Akten betr. Schriftwechsel über O-Directiven (Admiralty Staff, Papers Concerning Correspondence on Operational Directives), Pohl to Ingenohl, 26.1.15.

²⁴⁰ Marder, op.cit., vol.ii, p. 173. See also Corbett, op.cit., vol.ii, pp. 130-131, 416-421.

²⁴¹ Groos, op. cit., vol.iv, charts 1-7.

documented.²⁴² But his approach to effecting policy changes was in marked contrast to other naval officers whose method was to circumvent the appropriate chain of command.²⁴³ Captains Magnus von Levetzow and Adolph von Trotha were among several senior officers noted for this practice.²⁴⁴

Hipper's concept of a battle in German waters--as outlined in Part II, paragraph 3 of his critique--would have likely been realized if either Churchill's scheme for storming Borkum Island or Fisher's 'Pomeranian Landing',²⁴⁵ had been attempted. The U-boat trap tactic suggested by Hipper was to some extent employed at Jutland and promised much off Sunderland in August 1916 until Jellicoe refused²⁴⁶ to be drawn. Hipper's advice on sending expendable ships on raids which the battle fleet did not support was to be

²⁴² BA/MA, F 4062, op. cit., Hipper to Ingenohl, 27 Jan 1915; Hipper to Pohl, 7 July 1915, cited in Part I of this work, notes 133, 135.

²⁴³ See Gemzell, e.g., op. cit., pp. 180-183. See also Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 163ff, 174ff, 191. See also Adolph von Trotha, Grossadmiral von Tirpitz, (Breslau, 1933), pp. 114-124.

²⁴⁴ Herwig, op. cit., pp. 175-196.

²⁴⁵ Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 193.

²⁴⁶ Jellicoe, op. cit., p. 446.

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followed in the Meteor operations June-August 1915.

The fact that the High Seas Fleet rarely ventured further than 100 sea miles from Heligoland in 1915 may well be attributed to Hipper's recommendation.²⁴⁸ His advice on the decommissioning of older warships was generally heeded.²⁴⁹ In short, it appears Hipper's conclusions were reflected in the policy of the fleet command.

This critique of the battle of Dogger Bank was the last work of significance which Hipper did for Ingenohl. On 1 February 1915 he wrote in his journal:

Today I placed before the Fleet Commander the acutely painful question of the loyalty of his captains so that he would understand the consequences of the 24th. I have been very frank and honest with him...

The next day Hipper recorded in his journal that von Ingenohl had been relieved of his command. 'I am very sorry about this but there was nothing I could do to help him...'²⁵⁰

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Groos, op. cit., vol. iv, pp. 164ff., 244ff., Charts 9, 10.

248

Ibid, Charts 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14.

249

USNA, PG 76531/Reel 984, Admiralstab der Marine, Befehle an andere Behörden, op. cit., Pohl to Bachmann, 15 Feb 1915, re reducing Sixth Battle Squadron; Tirpitz to Pohl, 20 Feb 1915 re reducing Fifth Battle Squadron and old cruisers; Kaiser to Holtzendorff, 2 Nov 1915, ordering all Kaiser Wilhelm II class battleships out of service.

250

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 2/17, 1 Feb 1915.

On February 3 Hipper wrote:

Von Pohl (Chief of the Admiralty Staff) has been named Fleet Commander. It seems to me a more unlikely choice could not have been made by the Chief of the Naval Cabinet (von Müller). Eckermann (Fleet Chief of Staff) also thinks we have made a mistake. Von Lans (First Squadron Commander whose squadron was held in harbour on Ingenohl's order until too late) also will give up his command. That makes a powerful difference to me. I am anxious about tomorrow.²⁵¹

But the worries Hipper may have had about his own position must have vanished when he was invited to a late breakfast on the Royal Train the next day when the Kaiser arrived in Wilhelmshaven. Hipper accompanied the Kaiser as he inspected ships and visited hospitals and then listened without comment during the meal while the Kaiser lambasted Tirpitz' naval construction program in the presence of Tirpitz himself, von Müller, von Pohl, the new Fleet C-in-C, von Lans, and von Bachmann, Hipper's former Scouting Forces commander.

Shortly after the change of command, Hipper wrote that the new Fleet Commander could be expected to handle his ships with great caution.²⁵³ The naval policy under

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., loc. cit., 3 Feb 1915.

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Ibid, 2/20, 4 Feb 1915. Cf. Pohl, op. cit., pp. 106-107. See also Görlitz, The Kaiser and His Court, op. cit., pp. 62-3. See also Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, pp. 206-208.

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 2/22, 18 Feb 1915.

Hugo von Pohl amounted to a continuation of the Kleinkrieg strategy for the battle fleet but an intensified use of U-boats in commerce warfare. Admiral Pohl, according to Gemzell, 'took the initiative...and proclaimed the beginning of submarine commerce warfare.'²⁵⁴ The campaign began on 4 February 1915 and continued for about six months despite sharp protests received from the American government concerning the heavy loss of life on the Lusitania.²⁵⁶ In August, another crisis arose with the sinking of the liner Arabic and another sharp protest from Washington resulted in an order from von Pohl to the U-boat commanders forwarding the Kaiser's imperial decree that henceforth no passenger ships of any nation were to be sunk unless the passengers could be saved.²⁵⁷ Hipper's reaction was that the Germans were making a mistake.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ Gemzell, op. cit., p. 184.

²⁵⁵ Andreas Michelsen, Der U-Bootskrieg 1914-1918, (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 12, 13-21. Cf. Marder, vol. ii, op. cit., pp. 344-345.

²⁵⁶ U. S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915, Supplement The World War, (Washington, 1928), pp. 393-396, 436-438, 462, 476-478, 480-482, 489.

²⁵⁷ Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, op. cit., p. 412.

²⁵⁸ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 4/3, 1 Sept 1915.

The role of the U-boat in German naval strategy is central to the history of the Imperial Navy in the first World War. Hipper's personal journal contains numerous references to U-boat warfare²⁵⁹ which indicate he favoured it as an effective weapon for Germany. However, Hipper's official views on the tactical and strategical use of the U-boat indicate he did not feel it was a panacea, unlike most of his contemporaries.²⁶⁰ These unpublished observations are contained in his analysis of ship-type questions tendered in response to von Pohl's fleet-wide request²⁶¹ for commanders' opinions.

On 7 July 1915 Hipper submitted an extensive letter on naval ship types in response to von Pohl's request of 20 February; it included his definition of the missions and limitations applicable to the U-boat.²⁶²

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 1/10, 6 Aug 1914; 1/29, 23 Sept 1914; 2/27, 20 Mar 1915; 3/5, 1 May 1915; 3/6-7, 9 May 1915; 3/10, 27 May 1915; 4/3, 1-8 Sept 1915.

260

Ritter, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 119-120.

261

USNA, PG 77732/Reel 1129, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., Hipper to Pohl, 10 Apr 1915, see paragraph 1 of transmittal for date of request.

262

USNA, PG 77733d/Reel 1659, Kriegserfahrungen des Kommandos der Hochseestreitkräfte, 1 Apr-30 Juni 1915, (War Experiences of the Commands of the Forces Afloat), Hipper to Pohl, 7 July 1915, pp. 1-26. See pp. 10-12 for U-boat views of Hipper.

Hipper said:

Apart from offensive actions against enemy warships (among others, for example, the destruction of enemy sorties), and as a result of lessons learned, a range of activities previously performed by surface craft alone falls to the U-boats in the future:

- Strategical scouting;
- Clearing and securing designated areas;
- Guarding specific parts of the fleet at anchor;
- Commerce warfare in the traffic lanes of enemy ports;
- Minelaying, especially off enemy coasts.

Escorting and scouting by U-boats are only practicable by day; the securing of parts of the fleet underway is limited by insufficient (U-boat) speed; also their ability to scout tactically is gravely impaired by their insufficient surface speed and the impossibility of diving with their wireless rigged.

Concerning the scouting and security service, the U-boat only supports and reinforces the employment of surface forces; it cannot replace them.

The U-boats are of tremendous value as minelayers. They can lay a complete minefield, lay it secretly, and this is the best way to do it. The type of minelayer U-boats which carry their own mines to the entrances of enemy harbours appear especially suitable, effective and practical, and constitute a method of employment for torpedo-armed U-boats should they find only difficult targets for their weapons in the event the enemy are driven from the high seas.

Earlier in the paper Hipper outlined his thinking on the surface ship and stated his belief that the U-boat would not replace it. He recommended Germany take the lead in developing more sophisticated U-boats and build more of them. Hipper cautioned, however, that improved

defences and anti-submarine weapons could be expected and noted that in cases where the element of surprise was missing, the measure of U-boat success was very small. The two latter observations drew a marginal exclamation from von Pohl who wrote, 'This man always against the U-boat!'²⁶³

Were there any major conflicts on an official level between Hipper and Pohl? The documents indicate they usually agreed on most questions, especially technical and tactical matters, notwithstanding the U-boat marginal comment cited above. In matters of scouting force reorganization, Hipper was supported by Pohl. For example, Hipper desired to extend disciplinary authority to some of his subordinates which would require a change in fleet regulations; Pohl endorsed Hipper's recommendation.²⁶⁴ Again, when Hipper recommended some changes in mission for old torpedoboats, Pohl agreed.²⁶⁵ And Pohl supported Hipper's desire for heavier calibre armament on light cruisers.²⁶⁶

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Ibid, p. 7.

264 BA/MA, F 728/PG 65717/Reel 1313, Papers of the High Seas Fleet, op. cit., Hipper to Pohl, 17 Apr 1915, Pohl's endorsement, 25 Apr 1915.

265 USNA, PG 75632/Reel 984, Admiralty Staff Orders to Other Commands, op. cit., Hipper to Pohl, 8 May 1915, Pohl's endorsement, 10 May 1915.

266 USNA, PG 76533/Reel 983, op. cit., Pohl to Holtzendorff, 18 Oct 1915.

Concerning surface forces, Pohl was in favour of a fleet engagement in the North Sea but only on German terms, which meant in the Bight.²⁶⁷ Hipper is on record as being in agreement in his Dogger Bank report. However, Pohl's view of the war at sea was limited to North Sea options and like his predecessor, von Ingenohl, he was loth to risk anything.²⁶⁸ Hipper took a broader view in his analysis of German war experiences at sea in response to Pohl's fleet-wide questionnaire already mentioned. Hipper wrote on 7 July 1915:

...our present war strategy against England is due to its very nature stamped strategically defensive. This is because of England's geographical position combined with the lack of German Atlantic bases, i.e., the German Bight is cut off from the Atlantic and further, there is the relative strength of the British and German fleets. Due to the above circumstances a truly effective offensive on the high seas in order to sever British Atlantic communications and defeat England--which should be our aim--has not been possible.²⁷⁰

It should be noted that Pohl claimed in his private war letters that his admirals and captains were less in favour of offensive action than he was,²⁷¹ as of March 1915.

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BA/MA, F 3810/PG 62376, K.T.B. des K.d.H., Beurteilung der Sachlage im Seekrieg Mai 1915, (War Diary of the High Seas Fleet Command, Summary of the Situation on the War at Sea), ca. 15 May 1915, Admiral von Pohl.

268 Ibid, loc. cit.

269 Pohl, Aus Aufzeichnungen und Briefen, op. cit., p. 117.

270 USNA, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., loc. cit., pp. 4-6.

271 Pohl, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

Pohl's claim notwithstanding, Hipper's analysis was echoed by the German official history published in 1922²⁷² and by Arthur Marder in 1965.

Another aspect of the Hipper-Pohl relationship concerned the question of whether flying machines could replace surface ships in certain missions. Zeppelins in particular and to a lesser extent naval aircraft form a major part of the official history²⁷³ of Pohl's tenure as Fleet C-in-C. Hipper's analysis of this new technology has also not been published either by his biographer or the official historian. At the outbreak of the war Hipper was briefly in charge of all naval aircraft and the Naval Airship Division.²⁷⁴ This force included one zeppelin in the North Sea and two at Kiel, 12 seaplanes, and 12 land-based aircraft.²⁷⁵ On 29 August 1914 the billet of Chief of the Naval Air Forces was created and Rear-Admiral Philipp chosen to direct the planned buildup.²⁷⁶ Though divested of direct command of naval aircraft, Hipper included scouting missions for them in his operations orders for the defence of the German Bight throughout the war.

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Marder, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 3. See also Otto Groos, op. cit., vol. i, p. 41.

273

Groos, op. cit., vol. iv, chapters 4, 8, 11, 12.

274

Douglas Robinson, The Zeppelin in Combat, (Henley-on-Thames, 1971), p. 40.

275

Groos, op. cit., vol. i, chart 1.

276

Robinson, op. cit., loc. cit.

Hipper's appreciation of the capabilities and limitations of naval aircraft is set forth in his response to another question from von Pohl in the latter's fleet-wide inquiry.

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Hipper wrote:

Flying Machines

Airships are--without regard to attack functions--suitable for:
 strategical scouting;
 the tactical scouting prior to a battle;
 the security service:
 securing a sea lane, for securing a fleet--
 especially a fleet underway.

In limited circumstances (fixed wing) aircraft can serve in a similar manner as airships in tactical scouting and securing of sea lanes. Embarked in the cruisers and used from them, (aircraft) could increase considerably the working range of the cruisers for scouting in profitable ways, especially if they were equipped with wireless.

Similarly, the results of aircraft and airships hunting U-boats are worthy of note. Nevertheless, airships are as severely limited by the weather as aircraft; only after dawn can they be considered capable of scouting and escort duties. To be sure, they are capable of supplementing the function of the cruisers, and they ought to be so equipped.

The simultaneous use of light surface forces, airships and aircraft could be of great impact if systematically developed.

Should we make as great an effort in air weapons as in the underwater (weapons) it would give us absolute superiority over all other nations in the world.

An examination of the course of the war from July, 1915, when this was written, shows that Hipper's observations were largely valid. Airships and aircraft did perform these roles

and were usually successful to the degree he predicted, especially if the weather intervened. Michelsen's analysis of the U-boat war notes the value of aircraft in hunting submarines.²⁷⁸

During Admiral von Pohl's time as C-in-C there were several attempts to have him change the national defensive strategy to a more active one. The politics involved have been charted by Herwig, Gemzell, and Tirpitz himself to a greater extent.²⁷⁹ Perhaps the fitness report Pohl wrote in December 1915 on Admiral Hipper reflects Hipper's lack of participation²⁸⁰ in the machinations toward this more active strategy. Pohl stated that Hipper had fulfilled his duties very well and had developed into a superb flag officer from a very good torpedoboat commander some years before. He rated Hipper's performance at the Dogger Bank battle as 'creditable under the very difficult circumstances of that engagement' and said 'Hipper would be the best man to lead the fleet in its attacks on England.'²⁸¹ Only a few

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Michelsen, op. cit., pp. 76-78.

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Herwig, op. cit., pp. 176-184; Gemzell, op. cit., pp. 215-225; Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, pp. 208-280.

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See the private papers of Admirals von Müller, von Capelle, von Tirpitz, Behncke, Pohl, Trotha and Hipper; no mention is made of Hipper's participation.

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BA/MA, F 3468/PG 67613, Auszüge von Qualificationsberichten über Flaggoffiziere, Dezember 1915, Akten des Reichs-Marine-Amts, (Excerpts from Flag Officers' Fitness Reports, Papers of the Imperial Naval Office December 1915).

weeks later Admiral von Pohl fell ill and was relieved as Fleet C-in-C by Admiral Reinhard Scheer on 18 January 1916.²⁸² When Scheer's appointment appeared imminent,²⁸³ Hipper's reaction was as follows:

It looks like a new fleet commander will have to be named...hopefully Scheer.

Three days later, Hipper wrote:²⁸⁴

The danger that Admiral Holtzendorff would get the fleet, which I gravely feared, appears to have been avoided. Everything indicates that Scheer will take over the job.

Hipper's personal reaction to the staff changes under Scheer was concern over losing Capt. Max Hahn, of the battle cruiser von der Tann, and Capt. Magnus von Levetzow of Moltke. On 23 January 1916 Levetzow became Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, for Scheer and Hahn commanding officer of the new battleship Bayern.²⁸⁵

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Scheer set up a new planning section under Levetzow and Capt. Adolph von Trotha which effectively removed Hipper from the fleet planning business; under Ingenohl and Pohl Hipper had been heavily involved in this. Despite

²⁸² Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet, op. cit., p. 95.

²⁸³ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 4/23, 9 Jan 1916.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 4/24, 12 Jan 1916.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 4/25, 23 Jan 1916.

²⁸⁶ USNA, PG 76968-76973/Reels 943, 1044, Admiralstab Akten betr. Befehle für Flotten-Unternehmungen vom Apr 1916-Feb 1919, (Admiralty Staff, Papers Concerning Orders for Fleet Operations).

this, the Hipper-Scheer relationship of Fleet C-in-C and Scouting Force Commander began cordially with a 'most kind message' from Scheer to Hipper on the anniversary of the Dogger Bank battle. But by 15 March Hipper complained of severe combat fatigue. On 19 March he received a letter from the Fleet informing him they desired a complete reorganization of his command. Hipper wrote:²⁸⁷

I am very unlucky. Besides that, I have had the whole watch service and readiness of the light forces under me for 20 months, and the new fleet staff would cut me off from it all. There must be another way.

Hipper asked for sick leave on 20 March and on the 27th Admiral Scheer visited him aboard Seydlitz, approved Hipper's request and said everything had been arranged as Hipper desired. It was a good thing, too, for the day before, Hipper wrote of 'terrible pain and exhaustion.'²⁸⁸ However, Scheer did not stop with giving Hipper a medical leave of absence; he called Henning von Holtzendorff, Chief of the Admiralty Staff, and asked that Hipper be retired.²⁸⁹ There is a memorandum of this telephone call in Hipper's service record and it reads as follows:

²⁸⁷ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 5/5, 19 Mar 1916.

²⁸⁸ Op. cit., 5/5-9, 20-27 Mar 1916.

²⁸⁹ BA/MA, Personal Akten Hipper, op.cit., 15 Apr 1916, p. 42.

Vice-Admiral Scheer feels that he has come to the conclusion that Vice-Admiral Hipper no longer possesses the qualities of robustness and elasticity which the assignment of Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces demands and that it is also his view that the end of leave will not affect a complete restoration of his abilities. Besides, a change has been in order because the burdens of the B.d.A. have increased tremendously since the beginning of the war.

The man acting in the assignment of B.d.A., Rear-Admiral Boedicker, has shown himself to be the most suitable replacement since assuming the duties of the post. Perhaps it could be arranged that the duties of the B.d.A. could be lightened by removing responsibility for the Flag Officer, Torpedoboats and the airship contingents, and thus the senior man (Hipper) would be able to stay.

Holtzendorff disagreed with Admiral Scheer's position because he did not like Scheer 'coming forward with such radical suggestions so soon after his assumption of his command.'²⁹⁰ And Holtzendorff thought that relieving Hipper so soon after Scheer had succeeded Pohl as Fleet Commander-in-Chief could 'only damage the war leadership.' To this, Admiral von Müller, chief of the Naval Cabinet and responsible for naval officer personnel, wrote 'I agree' on the memorandum. Thus, von Müller's support of Hipper continued, averting his premature retirement. Meanwhile, Hipper had turned over command of the Scouting Forces to his deputy and proceeded to take 'the cure' at a spa.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 43.

Hipper spent five weeks at Bad Nenndorf. On 12 May he received a nerve specialist's report which said there was no evidence of damage to his central nervous system and that his only problem was nervous tension. That evening he accepted a dinner invitation from Frau Princess Heinrich and the next morning returned to duty aboard his new flagship ²⁹¹Lützow.

The Battle of Jutland

Soon thereafter, Hipper was involved in the largest and most complex surface battle in modern naval history. It occurred off Jutland, Denmark in the North Sea on 30 May-1 June 1916, and developed in five distinct phases. The first was the engagement between Hipper's and Beatty's battle cruisers on the afternoon of 31 May and the run south with Hipper leading Beatty onto Scheer's battle fleet. The second phase was the chase north with Beatty leading Hipper, Scheer and the German fleet onto Jellicoe's Grand Fleet. The third phase was the engagement of both fleets with Jellicoe deploying his columns to the left and broadside to Scheer's van. The fourth phase was the German High Seas Fleet fighting through the rear of the Grand Fleet on the night of 31 May-1 June to return to home base. The fifth phase was shepherding the stragglers in the German fleet back into safe waters and bringing

²⁹¹ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 5/10, 12 May 1916.

damaged ships home.²⁹²

Prior to the battle itself Scheer had used all means available to gather intelligence but weather prevented accurate zeppelin reconnaissance on 29 May and U-boats suffered from their inability to transmit safely. Hipper had noted these problems in his analyses of zeppelins and U-boats the year before.²⁹³ Because the British maintained wireless silence, wireless intercept brought Hipper little²⁹⁴ information on British intentions and movements.

In the first phase of the battle Hipper steered north and encountered six battle cruisers, engaging them at 1746. At 1712 the light cruiser Frankfurt in Hipper's screen reported five British battleships following the battle cruisers. Scheer intercepted this message and ordered his fleet to change course so as to come to Hipper's support as soon as possible. Unfortunately for the Germans, this meant Scheer had to abandon his plan²⁹⁵ to get to the west of Hipper and the enemy battle cruisers to trap the British between his guns and Hipper's.

²⁹² BA/MA, F 4061/PG 64808/Reel 347, Kr. Op. Nordsee 61 Seeschlacht vor dem Skaggerak 31.5.16-1.6.16, (War Operation North Sea 61 Sea Battle at the Skagerrak), Scheer to Kaiser Wilhelm II, 4 July 1916, pp. 7-34.

²⁹³ See notes 262 and 277.

²⁹⁴ K.T.B. der B.d.A., op.cit., 31 May 1916, FT Signal 600 from Neumünster.

²⁹⁵ Scheer to Kaiser, op.cit., loc.cit., p. 7.

Nonetheless, Hipper sank the British battle cruisers Indefatigable and Queen Mary in this phase of the battle. A critical factor in this phase was Hipper's development of the battle in a southeasterly direction towards the main German fleet. In his mid-June critique Hipper said:

Development of an action away from one's own battle fleet is to be avoided.

On the other hand, Admiral Scheer asserted in a conversation with the American naval observer, Berlin, on 24 March 1921 that he had had a conversation with Hipper on this point:

After the battle von Scheer had inquired of Admiral Hipper what the latter's course would have been in case Admiral Beatty had forced the cruiser fight to develop to the Northward instead of the Southwest. Admiral Hipper replied that he would probably have followed Admiral Beatty and doubted seriously he would have given the order to break off the engagement. In Admiral Scheer's opinion this would have been a serious mistake since the result would have been to separate the German battle cruisers from the main fleet to such an extent that it would have been impossible for the latter to support the cruisers. Admiral Scheer stated that it required extraordinary courage on the part of the Battle Cruiser Commander to break off the engagement under such circumstance, but felt that the necessity for bringing the fleet into action outweighed all other considerations...

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USNA, PG 77734/Reel 1130, Akten Hochseeflotte, Kriegserfahrungen der Hochseestreitkräfte, ca. 15 Jun 1916, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet, War Experiences of the Forces Afloat), Hipper to Scheer, Lessons Learned by the Scouting and Escort Forces and Cruiser Tactics, p. 2.

297 USNA, R.G. 45, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records & Library, Sub-file ZOS (f-G-I 14060), 'Notes on Opinions held by Admiral von Scheer,' The Naval Observer, Berlin, 24 Mar 1921.

Scheer's comments, made in 1921, may be interpreted as an attempt to influence American naval opinion on his performance at Jutland, perhaps because Hipper was regarded so highly by the Americans. Raeder says:

...The American historian, Commander Frost, is more than a little critical of Beatty in the battle and emphatically called Admiral Hipper the greatest of all the leaders at the Skagerrak. Admiral Hipper modestly waived the accolade in favour of Admiral Scheer, pointing out that Commander Frost was not in a position to appreciate fully the great responsibility of the fleet's Commander-in-Chief.

Frost's article on the battle of Jutland was published in 1919. The American naval observer's interview with Scheer took place two years later but only a few weeks before publication of letters from Scheer and Hipper to Frost in the same forum. Hipper eschewed the commander's role and commented strictly on tactical and technical matters.

The second phase of the Jutland battle was the chase north of Beatty by Hipper and Scheer. However, once the squadron of Queen Elizabeth class superdreadnoughts joined Beatty Hipper was unable to either slow Beatty down or overcome the now superior concentration of fire to which he was subjected. Scheer sent Hipper an 'undertake pursuit'

²⁹⁸ Raeder, op. cit., p. 74.

²⁹⁹ H. H. Frost, 'A Description of the Battle of Jutland,' USNI Proceedings, (Annapolis, 1919), vol. 45, p. 1829.

³⁰⁰ Hipper and Scheer to Frost, Discussion in USNI Proceedings, vol. 47, pp. 1083-1085.

order about this time. He ignored it, knowing it would result in his being punished heavily without being able to gain any advantage.³⁰¹ Though the High Seas Fleet's König class battleships were fast, the rest of the fleet³⁰² was not fast enough to keep up the pursuit. Hipper took his ships out of the fight, ordering them to turn to starboard to avoid further damage. He describes the moment:

...when I had to work against a blinding sunset and devastating enemy artillery. The sun stood deep and the horizon was hazy and I had to fire directly into the sun. I saw absolutely nothing of the enemy who was behind a dense cloud of smoke--the gunnery officers could find no target though we were a superb one ourselves. There was nothing else to do but take the ships out of battle for awhile.

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In his after-action critique Hipper made several comments on this phase of Jutland. Hipper said the action showed the British had managed to develop a 'flying squadron' of battle cruisers and fast battleships, representing a serious problem for future operations because in his opinion such a squadron could make it very difficult for his own main fleet to join an action brought about by his battle cruisers. Also, such a

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 5/13-14, 31 May 1916. For Scheer's order see Otto Groos, Der Krieg in der Nordsee, vol. v, von Januar bis Juni 1916, (Berlin, 1925), p. 527.

302 BA/MA, F 50-66/15, Deutsche Kriegsflotte, op. cit., vol. 14, S.M.S. König, Markgraf, Grosser Kurfürst, p. 24.

303 USNA, PG 77734/Reel 1130, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., Hipper to Scheer, pp. 1-4.

squadron made Hipper's primary mission of scouting the enemy's main fleet very difficult. He suggested the Germans counter with a 'flying squadron' of their own by combining several new battleships with his own force which he thought would be enough power to block an enemy escape and successfully trap the enemy between his guns and those of the main fleet.

In the battle's third phase at dusk on 31 May 1916 Hipper realized his flagship Lützow was so badly damaged 304 by the all-day battle and by the first encounter with the Grand Fleet that he must shift his flag. Derfflinger was signalled to take command of the line while Hipper transferred to the nearest battleworthy ship. Hipper described his predicament: 305

I had to find myself another flagship because I could no longer exercise command from one which was shot to pieces. Time to change ships. A torpedoboat was called alongside and we changed under heavy fire. The Fleet Commander had meanwhile reformed the line and began to lead them out to the west. Besides this, he had discovered a very unfavourable new development--that 24 modern battleships had been sighted to the northwest.

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BA/MA F 3899/PG 63257, K.T.B. S.M.S. Lützow, Bericht über die Versenkung S.M.S. Lützow nach der Schlacht der Skagerrak am 1. Juni. 1916, 3h 45. Vormittags, (War Diary of S.M.S. Lützow, Report of the Sinking of the Lützow after the battle of Jutland, at 0345 1 June 1916).

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 5/16, 31 May 1916.

The battle cruisers, to the everlasting credit of their own line, received the order during the battle turnabout to 'charge the enemy' and then set themselves in full cry and were swept by a hail of fire because of it. Meantime, drove my torpedoboat hoping to find an advantageous moment to board one of them. These 1½ hours that I spent in a hail of shell and splinters aboard the torpedoboat I shall not be likely to forget.

Hipper had been in the torpedoboat G-38 and followed the charge of the battle cruisers which had been ordered by Scheer to cover the fleet turnabout. Gradually, the murderous fire tapered as darkness fell and Hipper used the opportunity to board the Moltke at 2230. Meanwhile, his forces had sunk the battle cruiser Invincible and the armoured cruiser Warrior while managing to cover the withdrawl of the High Seas Fleet from a Grand Fleet envelopment. There is no doubt the German torpedoboat forces played a large part in preventing an immediate British pursuit of Scheer.³⁰⁶ However, in his after-action report Hipper said he thought massive torpedoboat attacks were pointless as long as the battle lines were engaged with each other. Further, small-scale torpedoboat attacks were unwise because they would leave boats damaged or out of ammunition in the vicinity of the enemy battle line.³⁰⁷

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Jellicoe, op. cit., pp. 361-366, 394-399.

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USNA, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., Hipper to Scheer, loc. cit.

The fourth and fifth phases of Jutland saw Hipper's damaged forces extricate themselves from the Grand Fleet's maw. A last incident in the night actions should be noted. When Hipper was challenged by H.M.S. Thunderer at 0030 German Standard Time June 1, the captain of the British battleship neither opened fire on the Moltke or reported her sighting 'as it was considered inadvisable to show up our battle fleet unless obvious attack was intended,' Marder says quoting the Jutland Dispatches.³⁰⁸ For the second time in his naval career, Hipper's life had been saved by a British mistake. Hipper ordered Captain Karpf of Moltke to steer to the south and pass ahead of the Grand Fleet.³⁰⁹ This he did and passed ahead of them at 0230 German Mean Time. Hipper reports the incident as encountering four large ships to port which were between him and the High Seas Fleet.

In retrospect, it may be said Hipper played a major role in inflicting whatever damage was suffered by the British at Jutland. He had accomplished his mission to cut off and destroy enemy warships and to lead any heavier forces on to Scheer and the High Seas Fleet.³¹⁰ Losses to

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Marder, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 158.

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BA/MA, F 3920/PG 63275, K.T.B. S.M.S. Moltke, 1.VI.16, 1h 20m Vm. (0120).

310

BA/MA, F 4065/PG 64808/Reel 347, op. cit., Operationsbefehl Nr. 6, Scheer to All Commanders, 28 May 1916, p. 1.

the Germans were not unacceptable but the damage was more severe than initially reckoned.

Communications were probably the greatest difficulty as the ships of the time were like dinosaurs with tremendous speed but blind and deaf when their delicate and scanty communications equipment was knocked out. German organization proved flexible enough to survive and fight through the British fleet at night. This indeed was an eventuality for which the Imperial Navy had been thoroughly trained.³¹¹ The after-action reports on both sides considered the night fighting performance particularly good. It should be remembered that Hipper's force was concerned with survival and escaping detection by first light. The only aspect of the battle which might reflect adversely on Hipper is the fact that his cruisers and torpedoboats did not sight or report the Grand Fleet until it was in a position to engage Scheer.

Hipper makes no excuse for this, though with his smaller ships to his disengaged side, he had sacrificed his scouts' mission so as to not obscure his gunnery range-finders. He also preserved them as battle resources. Hipper retained the ability to loose a torpedo attack should the main enemy fleet appear. He could also send in his torpedoboats to counter an enemy destroyer attack.

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P.R.O. Adm 137/1945, Action With the German High Sea Fleet 31 May-1 June 1916, Narrative of Action by Jellicoe, p. 75.

Furthermore, Beatty did his best to see that Hipper did not suspect Jellicoe's presence until it was too late. Beatty succeeded and cost Hipper much.

It is also noteworthy that both of Hipper's options with regard to torpedoboats were exercised and caused Jellicoe to turn away, saving Scheer. On balance, it seems there is good argument for the course Hipper took in this regard.

The fact that Hipper had first to even the odds and then go on to reduce the enemy to momentary inferiority underlines the problems faced by the admiral with fewer ships. Hipper seems to have prepared for every eventuality as well as possible and though German naval thought held that the accomplishment of the mission was more important than sinking ships, Hipper's last statements about the battle before he got the damage reports show only a desire to get at the enemy again and to sink more of their ships.³¹² He says in his Nachlass, 'My only thoughts were that we should have the whole English fleet before us at Horns Reef the next morning and there decide the issue.'

For his performance in the battle Hipper was awarded Germany's highest combat decoration, the Orden Pour le

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 5/18, 31 May 1916.

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Merite, by the Kaiser on 5 June 1916. He also received the Royal Bavarian Order of Max Joseph, Commander's Cross, which entitled him to be addressed as Ritter von Hipper and elevated him to the nobility. The Grand Duchy of Saxony awarded him the Royal Saxon Order, Order of Albrecht, with silver crown and swords. The Kingdom of Württemberg awarded him the Commander's Cross of the Royal Württemberg Military Service Order. Hipper was awarded three Hanseatic Crosses from Lübeck, Bremen and Hamburg.

After Jutland

Between the aftermath of Jutland and November 1916 little of consequence transpired for Hipper. The fleet went out on several operations but did not bring the British to battle again. U-boat warfare became a greater priority and on land the Brusilov offensive in the east and the Sommes offensive in the west strained Germany considerably. As the Germans concentrated on the U-boat war the mission of the fleet began to shift to U-boat protection and escort from German home waters. On 4 November Hipper received orders to take all available heavy ships and watch vessels to rescue and salvage U-20 and U-30 aground on the Danish coast. Neutral Denmark's attitude was uncertain and the Fleet C-in-C was concerned lest the boats be interned.³¹⁴

³¹³ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., Orden, loc. cit.

³¹⁴ Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet, op.cit., pp. 191-193.

Hipper took 2 battle cruisers, 11 battleships, 4 light cruisers and 12 torpedoboats because as he says, 'every German sortie made in foul weather had run into a surprisingly large enemy.'³¹⁵ By the time Hipper arrived U-30 had freed herself but was unable to dive and had to be escorted home. U-20, the boat which had sunk the Lusitania the previous year, was blown up after the crew was taken off to prevent her future salvage by neutral or hostile powers. On the way home, the dreadnoughts Grosser Kurfürst and Kronprinz were torpedoed but got back with little difficulty. Kaiser Wilhelm criticized the operation saying 'To risk a squadron for the sake of one U-boat, and in doing so almost lose two battleships, showed a lack of sense of proportion and must not occur again.'³¹⁶ Scheer criticized Hipper on technical grounds in his report to the Kaiser.³¹⁷ This incident came at an inopportune time for Scheer who was attempting to achieve complete freedom of action for his U-boats.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ BA/MA, F 4096/PG 64839/Reel 411, Kr. Op. Nordsee 82 Vorstoss zur Deckung und Hilfeleistung beim Festkommen 'U-20 und U-30,' (Sortie for the Protection and Assistance of U-20 and U-30) 4-5 Nov 1916.

³¹⁶ Scheer, op. cit., p. 192.

³¹⁷ BA/MA, F 4096, op. cit., Scheer to Kaiser Wilhelm II, 10 Nov 1916. Cf. Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet, op. cit., p. 193.

³¹⁸ Ritter, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 271ff.

Hipper supported the U-boat campaign of 1917.

³¹⁹
He said:

Time can make the U-boat war succeed, and I have the sound conviction that we will be victorious. I can be wrong and it is possible the enemy might find counter-weapons which are beyond our present calculations, but as has been said, I do not believe so.

The participation of Hipper's command in the U-boat campaign was two-fold: the scouting forces were part of the 'fleet-in-being' strategy which prevented a successful British attack on Germany's main U-boat bases and the scouting forces also supplied a large part of the personnel required to commission the new U-boats.³²⁰ Hipper's role³²¹ was to keep his command battle-ready despite the officer and rating drafts into the rapidly expanding U-boat service. He also had to defend German home waters as best he could and to help the U-boats get out and back 'to waters more than 20 meters deep, beyond the range of coastal guns, where they (U-boats) were fully capable of operating.'³²²

³¹⁹ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 6/23, 1 Feb 1917.

³²⁰ Scheer, Germany's High Sea Fleet, op. cit., p. 280.

³²¹ Raeder, op. cit., p. 80. See also WUA, vol.x, Part I, pp. 1-9, 31=39.

³²² WUA, op. cit., vol.x, Part I, p. 4.

During the latter half of 1917 the fleet was heavily involved in supporting mine-sweeping efforts to keep the U-boat sea access lanes open. There was another battle with heavy ships in the German Bight on 17 November 1917 but the losses and effects on both sides were negligible. The next month Admiral Scheer wrote the final fitness report in Hipper's service record. It read:³²³

On Vice-Admiral Ritter von Hipper
Commanding the Scouting Forces with
four years in the assignment.

Very active as a man and as a personality; perhaps he even stands out too much (which may be) the beginning of his downfall. His performance as a leader--for it is as such he has been in the forefront of all operations and he served with special distinction in the battle of the Skagerrak--is that of performing well at the right tactical moment. At the same time, when he is in charge of subordinate forces he does not supervise the tactical commanders closely enough and turns too much of the tactical work over to his staff. As a combat commander his temperament and competence cannot be faulted. He remains always a good leader. I don't know about peace, though, if one would want him as a fleet commander.

(s) Scheer, Fleet Commander

Despite Scheer's doubts about Hipper as a fleet commander in peace he turned to him in the summer of 1918 to command the fleet in war. Scheer said Hipper was chosen because of the following reasons:

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BA/MA, Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., 1 Dec 1917, Qualificationsberichte, (Fitness Reports), p. 39.

His great experience in matters appertaining to the Fleet, his efficiency in all the technical situations in which he had found himself with his cruisers, seemed to point to him as the most suitable person to whom I could confidently hand over the weapon from which I never thought to be separated in this life.³²⁴

Hipper's promotion and assignment as Fleet Commander were made in the context of a larger reorganization of the Imperial Navy in July-August 1918.³²⁵

Hipper was appointed Fleet C-in-C on 12 August 1918.

A few weeks previously Scheer had told Hipper that he 'had the confidence of the officer corps etc. etc.'³²⁶ and

this was cited by Admiral von Trotha as his own reason for recommending Hipper to the Naval Cabinet as Scheer's successor as Fleet C-in-C.³²⁷ Another officer privy to the proceedings concerning Hipper's assignment, Lieutenant Commander Ernst von Weizsäcker, confirmed in his private account of the conferences, that it was the view of the fleet Hipper was the best man for the job.³²⁸

³²⁴ Scheer, op. cit., p. 333.

³²⁵ Hubatsch, Der Admiralstab, op. cit., pp. 179-181.

³²⁶ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 8/20, 26 July 1918.

³²⁷ NS/SA, Nachlass von Trotha, op. cit., Trotha to Capt. von Bülow, of Naval Cabinet, 25 June 1918.

³²⁸ Hill, Die Weizsäcker-Papiere, op. cit., unpublished MSS, 7 July 1918.

Hipper's comment on these events was as follows:

The Fleet Commander was with me this morning, having just returned from Grand Headquarters. He informed me that everything had been arranged as he had requested. Holtzendorff is promoted to Grand Admiral and turns over his responsibilities in the next week. Upon promotion to admiral I will take over command of the fleet. ...On Thursday (9 August) I took over provisional command aboard the Kaiser Wilhelm II after a short speech. Enough of speeches...This evening (11 August) my formal assignment as Fleet Commander has been announced with promotion to admiral.³²⁹

His journal also shows he was not unaware of the disappointment of other naval officers who were passed over because of his appointment. He said that 'for 37 years a man in the navy speaks always of the next great step and it hardly ever comes.'³³⁰ Here Hipper is referring to his contemporaries who had served about as long as he had but whose fate it was to be retired before attaining one of the few full admirals' billets in the Imperial Navy.³³¹ Hipper's frustration with 'speeches' reflected the latest bad news from the western front.

³²⁹ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 8/22, ca. 1 Aug 1918; 8/23, 9 Aug 1918; 8/24, 11 Aug 1918.

³³⁰ Ibid, 8/22, ca. 1 Aug 1918.

³³¹ Cf. Herwig, op. cit., for admirals' discontent with personnel changes, pp. 237ff.

In the final analysis, it was the 'bad news' from the western front which led to the German military collapse, the naval mutinies and the German revolution of 1918. These events would force Hipper to deal with the most severe crises faced by any of the four wartime German fleet commanders. His appointment to succeed Scheer as Fleet C-in-C in August 1918 when the war was all but lost brought him a full admiral's flag and mixed emotions about the future. His tenure in that post began with 'bad news from the western front' and ended in mutiny, revolution and surrender of the best ships under his command.

PART IV

HIPPER, MUTINY AND REVOLUTION

Franz Hipper's role in the mutiny and revolution which accompanied the German collapse of 1918 can best be followed by posing and answering a series of questions: what events occurring prior to October 1918 are related to Hipper's actions in the mutiny and revolution? What was Hipper's reaction to the impending defeat of Germany? What was the context of the fleet sortie proposed for October 1918 and what was Hipper's involvement? How did Hipper deal with the initial outbreaks of trouble in the fleet and later with the spread of the revolt? Did any of his actions help trigger the revolution? To what extent did Hipper accommodate himself to the new political realities of the German revolution?

Prelude to Mutiny

In seeking to understand Hipper's thinking during the crises of October and November 1918, two aspects of the man must be examined: his concern for morale and discipline and his political attitudes.

Hipper's concern for morale and his ability to motivate men has been documented as early as 1907, when he

commanded the Prinz Heinrich.¹ In 1912 Hipper wrote an official paper on manning problems and his opinions reflected his concern for morale.² Again, in 1914 his report to the Kaiser evaluated morale as a substantial element of readiness.³ But by the summer of 1917 the course of the war had so debilitated the fleet that a seaman made a highly unusual call on an admiral and told him, 'There is something rotten in the fleet, excellency, and it needs clearing out.'⁴

The seaman was Petty Officer First Class Conrad Lotter of S.M.S. Bremse, a new light cruiser. The admiral was Hipper, who like Lotter, was Bavarian-born. Hipper's biographer, Waldeyer-Hartz, recorded the visit and said 'Hipper failed to come to a decision '⁵ on what to do with Lotter's information. But Waldeyer-Hartz does not describe Lotter's reasons nor the full extent of his message to Hipper nor the action Hipper took afterward. This despite the fact that Lotter's account of his visit to Hipper is

¹ Personal Akten Hipper, op. cit., Qualificationsberichte, entry for 1907. Cf. BA/MA F 3468, Imperial Naval Office, Papers concerning the High Sea Fleet, Reports on Performance of Captains in 1907 Manoeuvres, op. cit., part I, n. 102.

² BA/MA F 728/PG 67715, op. cit., pp. 16-17. Cf. n. 136.

³ USNA, PG 67250/Reel 494, Übungsberichte der Hochseeflotte, op. cit., Der Befehlshaber der Aufklärungsschiffe. Hauptgefechtsbesichtigungen der Aufklärungsschiffe, 7 April 1914, op. cit., para 3.

⁴ Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., p. 251. Lotter visited Hipper on 24 July 1917.

⁵ Ibid.

recorded in the Reichstag Committee of Inquiry's proceedings⁶ published in 1927, six years before Waldeyer-Hartz's work on Hipper.

In 1973, another student of the German collapse, David Woodward, repeated this canard of Hipper's reputed indecision in this matter.⁷

Lotter visited Hipper to report what appeared to him to be a revolutionary gathering or 'mutineers' conference' in the Tivoli Restaurant in Wilhelmshaven. Lotter's commanding officer, Capt. von Bülow, was away from the ship and Lotter did not trust the Bremse's executive officer to act on his information. He therefore took his courage in hand and called on Hipper, delivered his report and was dismissed with thanks. Hipper checked with von Bülow as to Lotter's reliability and followed up with action to assure no further trouble occurred. Hipper made several surprise inspections in the Second Scouting Group, transferred Capt. von Bülow to a shore billet and

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Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Verfassunggebenden Deutschen Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstages 1919-1928. Vierte Reihe. Die Ursachen des Deutschen Zusammenbruches im Jahre 1918. Zweite Abteilung, Der Innere Zusammenbruch, (Berlin, 1919-1928), vol. ix, pp. 43-44. This work is hereinafter abbreviated WUA.

⁷ David Woodward, The Collapse of Power, (London, 1973), pp. 68-69. For a similar assertion see Daniel Horn, The German Naval Mutinies of World War I, (Rutgers, 1967), pp. 110 ff. Lotter's testimony is contained in a letter dated S.M.S. Bremse, 20 Aug 1917, from Lotter to the Bavarian Reichstag Deputy Leicht. The letter was submitted to the Committee of Inquiry by Dr. Pfleger, formerly of the Central Party and later the Bavarian People's Party, their naval expert.

replaced him with Captain Westerkamp.⁸ Eight days later Hipper called Lotter to his quarters and asked him for a report on the happenings in Bremse. Lotter reported the first officer was arrogant and badgered his men. Hipper replaced him. Lotter also complained about the drudgery of harbour routine and the deteriorating quality of the food. Again, Hipper thanked him, rewrote the regulations for harbour duties so time in port constituted as much rest as possible and lightened the duties where possible. Luckily, the Imperial Naval Office about this time raised the food allowance by .30 marks per person per day⁹ so to some extent the shortages were alleviated. Lotter's written testimony to the Inquiry Committee's proceedings says that the crews were 'very very thankful' for all of Hipper's efforts and the navy's as well. Hipper also had Lotter transferred to the enlisted staff of the Flag Officer, U-boats, a nice shore billet. Strangely enough, Hipper's war journal lacks any mention of the Lotter incident.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid, loc.cit., Lotter to Leicht.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Lotter called on Hipper 24 July 1917, several days before the mutiny broke out on 3 August. Hipper's journal for that date and those following shows no reference to the visit. See Nachlass Hipper, 7/26-27, 19-30 July 1917.

The Lotter incident was a microcosm of the wider disturbances which had broken out in the light cruiser Pillau on 20 July 1917. On 3 August there was open mutiny in five battleships of the High Seas Fleet, the worse incidents occurring in the Prinzregent Luitpold. Documents¹¹ assembled by the German Naval Archive show Admiral Scheer, Fleet C-in-C, assumed responsibility for dealing with the situation. Court martials were held and 77 sailors convicted of mutiny. Of these, four were from the scouting forces: two from Pillau and two from Moltke; they were not among those given death sentences. Hipper's reaction to the sentences was:

Judgement has been pronounced against the main agitators to compensate for their serious deeds. 5 of them are sentenced to death, 4 to prison for terms of 12 to 15 years. I am very concerned whether this judgement is to be confirmed. In the interest of discipline, I hope very much it is.¹²

He also recommended to the fleet command that officers and petty officers develop closer relations with their men to prevent such outbreaks in the future.¹³ But the fleet high command did not adopt Hipper's recommendation, largely

¹¹ BA/MA, F 4078/PG 64923/Reels 351, 352, Flottenunruhen 1917-1918, (Fleet Disturbances). For mutineers' sentences see F-142 Gg 18/Alphabetische namentliche Zusammenstellung (Alphabetical list of Mutineers' Names).

¹² BA/MA, Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 7/33, 28 Aug 1917.

¹³ Herwig, op. cit., p. 206.

because they were set in the belief that the 1917 mutinies should be blamed on the German Independent Socialist Party,¹⁴ and initially, Hipper did not agree.¹⁵ He said:

Among our people there is unfortunately an anarchistic movement that occasions some serious thinking though only a single man on the Prinz-regent Luitpold started it. The whole movement was a result of excess--yesterday evening in the crew's quarters; the whole assembly was led out and later dispersed. One of the ringleaders was arrested and a list thereby obtained. Loyal men were contacted aboard all ships. Perhaps we have controlled it by this and nipped the whole thing in the bud, if it is not too late.

It appears Hipper was more interested in the causes of the disturbances than in finding a convenient scapegoat. Ten days later, however, when he learned of the results of an investigation by Fleet Judge Advocate Dobring, Hipper said:¹⁶

The investigation has succeeded in establishing a connection between the main agitators and Dittmann and his Independent Socialists. There are about 12 main agitators against whom the (judicial) process must be intensified.

Events later proved the Fleet's investigation to be less than objective; nonetheless, Hipper's concern for maintenance of discipline is evident throughout the

¹⁴ BA/MA, F 4078/PG 64923/Reels 351, 352, Flottenunruhen 1917-1918. See Aktenvermerk über die Sitzung im Reichskanzler Palais am 21. August 1917, (Records of Documents concerning the Conference in Reichschancellor's Palace, 21 Aug 1917). See also Walther Gladisch, Der Krieg in Der Nordsee, vom Sommer 1917 bis zum Kriegsende 1918, vol. vii, (Frankfurt, 1965), p. 5.

¹⁵ Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 7/29, 3 Aug 1917.

¹⁶ Ibid, 7/30, 13 Aug 1917.

summer of 1917. A year later, when Hipper assumed command of the fleet, morale and discipline were even more serious problems. Hipper was worried about the weakening of his forces which was engendered by major officer personnel changes; these occurred because Scheer established the Naval High Command in Grand Headquarters and proceeded to deprive the fleet of large portions of its remaining experienced commanders: between August and October 1918, some 48 per cent of the fleet captains and 45 per cent of the first officers were reassigned.¹⁷ They went where the demand was greatest: to the many billets created by the new high command. The problem even affected Hipper's own staff; Hipper had to insist that Rear Admiral von Trotha be allowed to remain as Fleet Chief of Staff for the transition from Scheer to Hipper as Fleet C-in-C. Hipper and Trotha

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For Hipper's concern over officer personnel changes see Nachlass Hipper, 8/22, 30 July 1918, as cited in Herwig, op.cit., p. 253, and Nachlass Hipper, 8/24, 11 Aug 1918; for fleet personnel changes see Wilhelm Deist, 'Die Politik der Seekriegsleitung und die Rebellion der Flotte Ende Oktober 1918,' Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Oct 1966, p.348. See also Herwig, op.cit., loc.cit. Deist's sources for the figures are Nachlass Levetzow and Rangliste der Kaiserlichen Marine 1914-1918. For an organizational chart of Scheer's new high command and its billets see Hubatsch, Der Admiralstab, op. cit., Document 28, pp. 252-254.

in 1918 worked well together though Trotha in 1916 had attempted to have Hipper retired.¹⁸ Trotha reported to Levetzow in 1918 that Hipper was 'pleasant and amenable in daily service.'¹⁹ Hipper also thought highly of Trotha²⁰ and was explicit in that his replacement must be someone 'who could make his views stick.'²¹ The change in Trotha's assignment was not effected until 5 November but by then the war was all but lost.

Meanwhile, the navy had tried to strengthen the political acumen in the fleet by assigning Capt. Karl Boy-Ed of the Admiralty Staff; his considerable experience included naval attache duty in Washington which had ended in 1915 when he was expelled from the United States.²² Boy-Ed, at the time of his assignment to the fleet, was chief of the Admiralty Staff's Press Department. Boy-Ed felt he would be able to re-educate some of the senior fleet officers 'with the help of the Fleet C-in-C who is wise to the problems of the importance of the political

¹⁸ Nachlass Hipper, 5/5, 19 March 1916.

¹⁹ M.O.D., Admiralty, N.H.B., Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 44, Frame 00723, Rear Admiral von Trotha to Capt. Magnus von Levetzow, 10 Aug 1918.

²⁰ NA/SA, Nachlass von Trotha, op. cit., Hipper to Trotha, 25 Sept 1918, pp. 1-2.

²¹ Op. cit., loc. cit., p. 3.

²² Herwig, op. cit., p. 272. See also Franz von Rintelen, The Dark Invader Wartime Reminiscences of a German Intelligence Officer, (New York, 1933), pp. 92ff. for Boy-Ed's involvement in the German sabotage effort.

education of the men.'²³

When Hipper assumed command of the High Seas Fleet it was still capable of getting underway and fighting in a mechanical sense, according to Lt. Cdr. Ernst von Weiszsäcker, navigator of S.M.S. von der Tann, who was in his first non-staff assignment in several years. He felt that the fleet was a mere shadow of its former self and existed solely as support for the U-boat effort and great fleet operations were no longer undertaken.²⁴ This malaise was engendered perhaps by the fact officers and petty officers had not been aboard their ships nearly as long as had their men. Indeed, Herwig says 'the deck and petty officers were judged by Hipper to be unreliable and some were "inciting the men" to disobey executive officer commands.'²⁵

Personnel problems precipitated a conference aboard the fleet flagship, S.M.S. Baden, on 9 September 1918. One by one, Hipper's admirals and commodores reported on the condition of their crews. Commanders of torpedoboats

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Wilhelm Deist, Militär und Innenpolitik im Weltkrieg 1914-1918, vol. ii, (Düsseldorf, 1970), pp. 959-961. Boy-Ed to Lt. Cdr. Selchow, 9 Sept 1918. This is from Admiralty Staff, BA/MA F 2414. See n.1, Deist, p. 959.

²⁴ Hill, Prof. L.E., ed. Die Weiszsäcker Papiere, MSS, 1918, p. 2, entry for 30 Jan 1918.

²⁵ Herwig, op. cit., p. 263.

and U-boats said their crews were reliable but it was otherwise in the big ships. Squadron commanders reported the better officers had long since gone and Admiral Boedicker of the First Battle Squadron said 'a return to basic discipline' was required for the crews 'to be got back in hand.'²⁷ Hipper told all the commanders that the quality of officers, as reflected in their personal behaviour, 'had greatly deteriorated and a positive outcome of efforts to improve discipline was very unlikely.'²⁸ He said the officers had to handle their subordinates on an individual basis. Indeed, personnel problems, especially quality of officers, were considered a major factor in the collapse of naval authority not long after the conference. Before Trotha left as Fleet Chief of Staff, Hipper asked him to write an analysis of fleet troubles and although the report did not reach Hipper until February 1919 it is germane because Hipper told Trotha, 'I agree completely with the report.'²⁹ The report said, in part:

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BA/MA, F 4070/PG 64914/Reel 380, Revolution 1918. Capt. Heinrich, Commodore Torpedoboats, to Vice Admiral von Trotha, Chief of the Admiralty, 'Wieder geschrieben nach meinen Tagebuchaufzeichnungen,' (Excerpt from my daily Journal), Kiel, July 1919, 26 pp., entry for commanders conference on 9 Sept, p.1.

²⁷ Ibid, loc. cit., Opinion of Vice Admiral Boedicker.

²⁸ Ibid, loc. cit., Opinion of Hipper.

²⁹ NS/SA, Nachlass von Trotha, op. cit., Hipper to Trotha, 2 February 1919, p. 1.

In my personal opinion the state of officer manning within the fleet in October 1918 was satisfactory for torpedoboats, good for light cruisers and poor for battleships... Senior officers of divisions had repeatedly pointed out the damage caused through the almost total disappearance of efficient middle-rank officers from the large ships and also through the frequent changes that had taken place throughout all officer posts in these ships...

There appears to be ample proof that our armed forces were unable to withstand such a long war...The unceasing depletion in the front-line ranks of youthful enthusiasm and ability in officers and men; their replacement by older age groups already burdened by home worries, or by the very young and inexperienced...already influenced by the eroding effects of the struggle on the home front--this endless and inevitable trend created an unsound foundation and provided the essential ingredients of discontent.³⁰

In sum, though Hipper's concern for morale and discipline was evidenced from his earliest commands, he could not control the events of war which gradually eroded the quality of his officers in the big ships.

The second aspect of understanding Hipper's actions in late 1918 concerns his political attitudes. Recent works cite Hipper's political opinions--as expressed in his war journal--as 'typical' of the officer corps of

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M.O.D., Admiralty, N.H.B., Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 49, Frames 00990 ff. and 00994 ff. Cf. A.J. Marder, op. cit., vol. v, 1918-1919: Victory and Aftermath, (London, 1970), pp. 174-175.

which he was a part.³¹ To illustrate his thinking in its larger context, three benchmarks of the political Hipper, which are directly related to the internal development of German national policy, have been selected: the continuing war aims debate, the 1915 crisis over unrestricted U-boat warfare and the 'July crisis' of 1917.

The first benchmark concerns an official paper Hipper wrote in July 1915 which dealt in part with the national policy decisions necessary for further capital ship construction. In this paper, already analyzed in pages 136ff. in Part II of this work, Hipper was explicit in leaving policy decisions to the government though he did outline what ship-types he believed would be required to implement certain possible German policies successfully. He advocated the kind of ships which assumed a world power basis or Weltmacht government policy.³² In this he was typical of the naval officer corps, as Herwig shows in his article, 'War Aims of the German Navy.'³³ But Hipper

³¹ Herwig, op. cit., 'The Executive Officer Corps in Politics,' pp. 179 ff. See also Wilhelm Deist, Militär und Innenpolitik, op. cit., pp. 244, 795, 998, 1014, 1317, 1347ff, 1359 ff. Hipper's journal is cited in all of these.

³² USNA, PG 77733d/Reel 1659, Kriegserfahrungen, op. cit., pp. 3-6. See also Part II of this work, n. 145 supra.

³³ Holger H. Herwig, 'Admirals versus Generals: the War Aims of the Imperial German Navy 1914-1918,' Central European History, vol. 5, p. 209, pp. 212-219 ff. See also Gemzell, Organization, Conflict and Innovation, op. cit., pp. 216 ff.

was atypical in that he in no way subsumed political responsibility in his official duties until the revolution of November 1918 forced him to do so. On a definite war aims program, however, his personal journal is silent other than to record his aversion to a 'foul peace.'³⁴

The second benchmark concerns Hipper's position on the suspension of unrestricted U-boat warfare in the summer of 1915. Gerhard Ritter labels this internal German political crisis as 'highly significant for the development of German militarism in war.'³⁵ Admiral von Tirpitz, Secretary of State for Navy and the Kaiser's advisor on naval strategy, and Admiral Gustav von Bachmann, Chief of the Admiralty Staff who was largely responsible for the overall conduct of U-boat warfare, both disagreed with the political leadership of Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg.³⁶

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 7/23-24, 8 July 1917.

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Gerhard Ritter, op. cit., vol. iii, The Tragedy of Statesmanship--Bethmann Hollweg as War Chancellor (1914-1917), (Miami, 1972), p. 133.

36

Ritter, *ibid*, p. 132. See also Tirpitz, Dokumente, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 382-384. See also Görlitz, The Kaiser and His Court, op. cit., pp. 102ff. See also Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Betrachtungen zum Weltkriege, vol. ii, Während des Krieges, (Berlin, 1921), p. 114.

He contended the continued sinkings of passenger ships would result in conflict with the United States and with the Kaiser's backing, ordered them stopped.³⁷ In protest, Tirpitz and Bachmann submitted their resignations.³⁸ Of these actions, Ritter says:

For these high naval officers their undertaking had become an end in itself, a pure matter of prestige...the Admirals laid claim to their own political responsibility and had the audacity to put their resignations to the Sovereign in the form of an ultimatum in the manner of cabinet ministers.

³⁹ Hipper's own thoughts on this subject show he was against suspending unrestricted U-boat warfare:

1 Sept. (1915). In the last few days a rumour has surfaced...that the Chancellor has been thinking about a change in the present form of U-boat warfare; it appears confirmed. Our state secretary (Tirpitz) should submit his resignation again. The Kaiser apparently has been following the unwise advice of the Chief of the Naval Cabinet von Müller. Indications are that the negotiations with the American Ambassador Gerard will lead to a cessation of U-boat warfare, no neutrals to be sunk without previous warning, and passengers given the opportunity to save themselves...The devil take these defeatists!

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Ritter, op. cit., pp. 147-149. Cf. Tirpitz, Dokumente, vol. ii, pp. 416ff. See also Hermann Bauer, Reichsleitung und U-bootseinsatz 1914-1918, (Lüneburg, 1956), pp. 55ff.

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Ritter, op. cit., p. 133.

39

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 4/3, 1 Sept 1915.

Hipper's view that Tirpitz should again submit his resignation is significant because it indicates his political attitude was drifting toward militarism. As

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Gerhard Ritter explains:

The resignation of the universally admired Grand Admiral Tirpitz would have been calculated like nothing else to bring to the boiling point public agitation over the U-boat question and against the political leadership--including not the least the Kaiser himself.

Wilhelm II described Tirpitz' approach to the crisis over U-boat warfare as a 'regular military plot' and removed him from all policy-making in the use of naval forces against the enemy.

The third benchmark illustrating Hipper's political attitudes concerns the 'July crisis' of 1917, significant in both German militarism and German history. The crisis developed around the issues of peace and domestic political reform.⁴¹ The Reichstag was recalled by Bethmann Hollweg because the war appropriations were exhausted and approval was needed to continue the war.⁴² However, the

⁴⁰ Ritter, op.cit., vol.iii, p. 133; for Kaiser's opinion, see p. 134.

⁴¹ Arthur Rosenberg analyses this subject in Imperial Germany The Birth of the German Republic 1871-1918, (Boston, 1970 ed.), pp. 152ff. See also A.J. Ryder, The German Revolution of 1918, A Study of German Socialism in War and Revolt, (Cambridge, 1967), p. 87ff. See also S. William Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy, (New York, 1946), pp. 25-28. See also Deist, Militär und Innenpolitik, op.cit, Chapter 8, pp. 649ff.

⁴² Ritter, op.cit., p. 457.

Reichstag was in no mood to accede to the nation's right-wing military leadership;⁴³ a highly critical speech on 6 July by Matthias Erzberger, a Central Party deputy, precipitated the crisis. Gerhard Ritter's⁴⁴ analysis, as it applies to naval policy, seems valid:

This bourgeois politician now painted Germany's military and economic situation in such gloomy colours that the only way out seemed to be an immediate peace initiative by the government, based on a declaration by the Reichstag. Erzberger's pyrotechnics were given even greater impact by the proof he adduced from his own statistics that naval command forecasts had been in error. He was lending voice to what countless others sensed to be true but dared not say openly.

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Hipper's reaction to the Erzberger address was as follows:

The domestic political scene appears worse. The enemies of the U-boat and the people for a foul peace gain more and more ground. In the Reichstag session Delegate Erzberger has made a tremendous attack in these directions. Great excitement. If we continue to dawdle further, we will certainly lose the war, especially if we go so wickedly against the Reich. Even if we find a way out of the present dilemma and again patch up our differences, we will go nowhere with this incompetent, the Reichschancellor. Away with the Reichstag, send it home, name a dictator. That to me appears the proper course.

⁴³ Hans Gatzke, Germany's Drive to the West A Study of Germany's Western War Aims During the First World War, (Baltimore, 1966), pp. 189ff.

⁴⁴ Ritter, op. cit., p. 465.

⁴⁵ Nachlass Hipper, 7/23-24, 8 July 1917. Cf. Herwig's citation of last few lines in The German Naval Officer Corps, op. cit., p.212, n.3: 'Away with it, send the Reichstag home, appoint a dictator, that seems to me the proper course.' Cf. Deist, op. cit., p. 795, who cites the balance of the passage quoted here.

In this instance, Hipper's reaction was that of other ranking naval officers, according to Holger Herwig.⁴⁶

As to general reaction to Erzberger's speech, Fritz Fischer says, 'The impression made by Erzberger's speech was extraordinary; the idea that the Reichstag should take up an independent initiative was revolutionary.'⁴⁷

The Army High Command reacted to Erzberger's speech by sending Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff to Berlin with the intent to counter its effect.⁴⁸ Hipper hoped 'that Hindenburg and Ludendorff are victorious and can bring all these machinations to an end.'⁴⁹ As it turned out, the generals failed to convince the Kaiser that Erzberger was in error nor did they ever get to meet the parliamentarians involved. Ritter regarded the generals' action as 'open meddling with political questions' by the Army High Command.⁵⁰

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Herwig, op. cit., loc. cit.

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Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, (London, 1967), p. 396.

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Ritter, op. cit., p. 469. Cf. Deist, pp. 789-790. Documents 317 and 318, Reaction of Military Censors to Pessimistic Views of Situation and Col. Bauer to Erzberger. Bauer was chief of the Army Command Staff operations department and liaison with prominent Reichstag politicians.

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Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 7/23, 4 July 1917.

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Ritter, op. cit., loc. cit.

The 'July crisis' of 1917 was also concerned with domestic political reform. Of this Hipper said:

The domestic political situation is still unclear. To begin with, the Kaiser has issued a rescript wherein he has promised the Prussian people full, secret, and direct franchise for their house of representatives. It looks like freedom but it is certainly forced under difficult circumstances. Presently, it appears one would desire a compromise so that something further could be done. The Bavarian representatives as well as the National Liberals and the Central Party appear to be the only sensible people; (they) turn away from Erzberger who has made the session in Berlin into a very divisive parley, so much that the old Spahn has had a slight stroke fighting it. What good it will do at all, I don't know as long as Bethmann remains.⁵¹

Hipper was apparently as anxious over the divisive effects of the debate engendered by Erzberger's speech as by the reform the Kaiser was granting. He was, like most of establishment Germany, on the horns of a dilemma: political reform was required to give the masses an incentive to win the war but if granted, the resulting social and economic changes would precipitate the decline of the old order.⁵² The promise of reform came at the time of the resignation of Bethmann Hollweg who had extracted the promise from the Kaiser. Hollweg was deposed by the Army

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Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 7/24, 13 July 1917.

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Fritz Fischer, op.cit., p. 398.

working with the Reichstag opposition . Further, General Ludendorff, Chief Quartermaster-General, threatened to resign unless Hollweg acceded.⁵³ Ritter concluded that after Hollweg left, 'Militarism was no longer a problem. It was a harsh reality.'⁵⁴ Of the Chancellor's fall, Hipper said: 'Word from Scheer today (13 July 1917). At last Bethmann has fallen. Hurrah! If only it is not too late.'⁵⁵

In his jubilation over the Chancellor's fall, however, Hipper misjudged the consequences of virtual military rule as well as the veracity of the Kaiser's promise in the matter of reform. As Wilhelm Deist asserts, 'There was a connection between this lack of domestic reform and the events of 1918.'⁵⁶ A. J. Ryder also said:

By failing to put into effect internal reforms the government missed taking the only course which could have preserved Germany's basic political structure and averted the revolution of November 1918...Instead the advocates of total victory won the day, and total war ultimately gave rise to totalitarian politics.⁵⁷

Hipper, in sum, was on the side of Hindenburg and Ludendorff and thus appears politically reactionary.

⁵³ Ritter, op.cit., p. 476 and Fischer, op.cit., pp. 429ff.

⁵⁴ Ritter, op.cit., p. 487.

⁵⁵ Nachlass Hipper, loc.cit.

⁵⁶ Wilhelm Deist, 'Die Unruhen in der Marine 1917/18,' Marine Rundschau, 1971, p. 337.

⁵⁷ A.J.Ryder, op.cit., p. 86.

The Defeat of Germany

When Hipper returned from leave on 2 October 1918 he found the Army High Command had pronounced the war lost. He said he could not believe the situation was so bad. He asked Scheer what the navy should do and Scheer replied that an immediate intensification of the U-boat war would keep some kind of pressure on the enemy.⁵⁸ Hipper's reaction, when faced with defeat, was to say:

There must be a way out of this terrible situation. God will show us. The bad thing is that the army has lost the faith of its own high command and vice versa--in complete contrast to the navy which is fully behind Scheer and his comrades...⁵⁹

But the navy was not 'fully behind Scheer and his comrades.' Hipper had been told as much by his subordinate commanders, it will be recalled, when he held a command conference aboard S.M.S. Baden on 9 September.⁶⁰ In his 2 October Nachlass entry, Hipper said he hoped the German people would be united in adversity but he doubted it; the Bulgarians had withdrawn from the war on 29 September and left a gaping hole in southern German defences.⁶¹ On 1 October General Ludendorff, who the year

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Nachlass Hipper, 8/30, 3 Oct 1918.

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Ibid, 8/31, 3 Oct 1918.

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See n. 26 *supra*.

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Ulrich Czisnik, 'Die Unruhen in der Marine 1917-18,' Marine Rundschau, 19/0, p. 649.

before had advocated a victor's peace, had to report to the Kaiser that 'a positive end is not in sight, troop replacements sent to the front were becoming unreliable, and the army is suffering from Socialist propaganda.'⁶²

In essence, even German soldiers began to lose heart when the military results were no longer in doubt. The Flanders Front, held by naval infantry and artillery for four years and the main U-boat operations base for U-boat attack on British sea communications, was being evacuated.⁶³ Hipper found an officer-evacuee assigned to his quarters as a place to sleep.

On 30 October 1918, Prince Max of Baden, a noted liberal, was named Chancellor. Hipper wished him good luck, noting in his journal that the new coalition government was better than he feared though it included two Social Democrats and Admiral von Hintze as Foreign Minister, of whom Hipper approved.⁶⁴ But only two days later von Hintze was replaced by Wilhelm Solf, the former Colonial Minister. And Hipper labeled Max von Baden's inaugural speech before the Reichstag that day as 'debilitating.'⁶⁵ Basically, it was a proposal for peace without

⁶² Czisnik, op. cit., p. 649.

⁶³ Gladisch, op. cit., pp. 330ff.

⁶⁴ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 8/30-32, 3-4 Oct 1918.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 8/33, 5 Oct 1918.

annexations, with negotiations on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points. The speech also contained the proposal of full parliamentary government for Germany as well as some interesting ideas about European security and working classes.⁶⁶ As Hipper said, it was the 'death-day of Bismarck's Reich.'⁶⁷ His Reich had restricted the Reichstag to a role little more than the fig leaf of absolutism,⁶⁸ whereas Max was basing his government on the principles and the sovereignty of 'the people in parliament assembled.' This same day--5 October--Max sent the first peace note to Wilson.⁶⁹ Deist says that when the realistic tone of this note was contrasted to the military's optimistic propaganda, 'the leading elements which advocated a victor's peace collapsed; and there was general demoralization in German society.'⁷⁰ Not until February 1919 did Hipper say he had given up his general optimism that Germany would find a way out of her troubles. By then he thought

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U.S. Department of State, Papers Related to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1918 Supplement I: The World War, (Washington, 1933), vol. i, pp. 346-351. This contains a copy of Prince Max's inaugural speech.

67 Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 8/33, 5 Oct 1918.

68 A.J.P. Taylor, The Course of German History, A Survey of the Development of Germany Since 1815, (New York, 1962), p. 110.

69 Czisnik, op. cit., loc. cit. For copy of the note see U.S. Department of State, op. cit., p. 338.

70 Deist, 'Die Unruhen in der Marine,' op. cit., p. 339.

the country would go the way of Russia and was worried about being found by German revolutionaries.⁷¹

The Last Battle

To establish Hipper's role in the controversial October 1918 fleet sortie, it is necessary to analyze in historical context the planning and politics which surrounded the last battle of the High Seas Fleet. The action was intended to 'relieve the right wing of the army either directly by inflicting damage on his supply ships or indirectly by threatening such damage.'⁷² A fleet engagement was reckoned on as a possibility. Though the idea of a decisive naval battle had early origins in imperial naval strategical thinking,⁷³ the origins of such an action in October 1918 would seem to be those found in the private correspondence of some leading naval officers.

On 5 October Captain Michaelis of the Imperial Naval Office in Berlin wrote Captain Levetzow in Grand Headquarters and pointed out the tremendous political

⁷¹ NS/SA, Nachlass von Trotha, Hipper to Trotha, 2 Feb 1919.

⁷² P.R.O., Adm 137/3891, 'Frustration of the Naval Offensive of Oct 1918,' by Cdr. Hintzmann, Senior Admiralty Staff Officer on Hipper's Staff, p. 1.

⁷³ Gemzell, op.cit., pp. 50ff., 138ff., 176ff.

impact a successful naval action would have, especially on the home front.⁷⁴ Indeed, Prince Max of Baden, the new Chancellor, had said in his inaugural speech that day:

Whatever the result (of his first diplomatic note to Wilson) may be, I know it will find Germany firmly resolved and united--as well for an honest peace which refuses to consider every selfish violation of rights of others, as also for the final life or death battle to which our people would be forced without its own fault if the answer of the powers waging war with us to our offer should be dictated by the will to destroy us.⁷⁵

Sentiments similar to those of Michaelis were expressed on 6 October by Captain Levetzow in a letter to Admiral Trotha, Hipper's chief of staff; he coupled his sentiments with assertions about such a battle satisfying the 'honour of the officer corps.'⁷⁶ On 7 October the idea of a final fleet battle is mentioned in Hipper's journal. Hipper discussed the idea with his staff and his personal journal shows he believed the situation might become serious enough to warrant the risks such a battle would entail.⁷⁷ Hipper and his staff recorded their opinion which has been widely cited as evidence he favoured a death

⁷⁴ Herwig, *op.cit.*, pp. 242-243. See also Deist, 'Politik der Seekriegsleitung', *op.cit.*, p. 353. See also Ritter, *op.cit.*, vol. iv, p. 380. See also Nachlass Levetzow, *op.cit.*, Box 4 vol 9, Michaelis to Levetzow, 5.10.1918.

⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, *op.cit.*, p. 351.

⁷⁶ Herwig, *op.cit.*, loc.cit. Cf. Nachlass Levetzow, *op.cit.*, (Admiralty copy), Reel 49, Frame 00066, Levetzow to Trotha, 11 Oct 1918.

⁷⁷ Nachlass Hipper, *op.cit.*, 8/1-2, 7 Oct 1918.

battle.⁷⁸ It includes the following statements:

5. In the final analysis the war should not be allowed to end without the employment of the fleet in its role as the trump card of national power working its full influence.

6. As to a battle for the honour of the fleet in this war, even if it were a death battle, it would be the foundation for a new German fleet of the future if our people were not altogether defeated; such a fleet would be out of the question in the event of a dishonourable peace.

7. The decision concerning these questions must follow from higher places. The High Seas Fleet is such an important factor in national power that the Fleet C-in-C, in his opinion, should not engage it, should the moment come, without further guidance.

Concentrating on point 6, Wilhelm Deist asserts that the concept of a fleet battle for honour was obsolete and 'had no place in modern war.'⁷⁹ The British appear to have thought otherwise and Marder⁸⁰ cites several officers on it. Seen in context, point 6 was but one of several considerations in the fleet command's thinking and was by no means pre-eminent. Also, point 7 shows Hipper considered Scheer's strategical approval necessary before he would commit the fleet to action.

Hipper was presented with a draft operations plan⁸¹ by Admiral Trotha on 10 October involving a bombardment of the English coast and an interruption of war supplies to

⁷⁸ Herwig, op.cit., p. 243; Horn, op.cit., pp. 204ff.; Deist, op.cit., p. 352.

⁷⁹ Deist, op.cit., p. 355.

⁸⁰ Marder, op.cit., vol.v, pp. 176-177.

⁸¹ Deist, op.cit., p. 354. See also Herwig, p. 243.

to the western front as well as an encounter with the British fleet. On the same day Hipper reported to Scheer that 'his warrant officers and petty officers had become unreliable.'⁸² Two days later Hipper received information from Grand Headquarters which indicated the Germans had only two months of aviation fuel available if, as expected, they were cut off from the Russian and Rumanian oil fields. This was cited by the Army High Command as one of the main reasons for the need of an armistice.⁸³ Interestingly enough, among Hipper's flag officers only Commodore Heinrich of the torpedoboats saw fit to inform his crews of the real war situation at this time⁸⁴ although the other flag officers were as well briefed. This fact is a harbinger of the communications problems which would dog Hipper until the final days of the conflict.

Hipper was shown the German armistice proposals by Erich Raeder, his former Chief of Staff who was assigned to the German negotiating team. Hipper judged the proposals as 'varying from the favourable to the unacceptable.'⁸⁵

⁸² Herwig, op. cit., p. 253. Cf. n. 25 supra.

⁸³ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/3, 12 Oct 1918.

⁸⁴ BA/MA, F 4070/PG 64914/Reel 380, Revolution 1918, op. cit., Commodore Heinrich's report, p.2, 12 Oct 1918.

⁸⁵ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/2, 10 Oct 1918.

Meanwhile, Admiral Paul von Hintze, the former foreign minister, was drafted to ease the Kaiser into recognizing a change from absolute to constitutional monarchy was required to forward the peace negotiations. Hipper records the Kaiser as being in full agreement with the proposed changes as of 12 October.⁸⁶

Hipper appears to have been well-informed on the progress of the peace negotiations and the political situation in Berlin. He cited the German government's response on 13 October which promised constitutional government in Germany as the Allies demanded.⁸⁷ Hipper noted that all officers 'stand behind the Imperial government' but at the same time, the fleet attack plan was being discussed by Scheer in terms of naval honour:

It is impossible that the fleet remain uncommitted in the last battle which sooner or later precedes an armistice. It must be committed. Although it is not anticipated a decisive result will come from such a course, it is a question of honor and existence, from the moral viewpoint, for the navy to have done its utmost in the last battle.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ibid, 9/3, 12 Oct 1918. See also Ritter, op. cit., vol. iv, pp. 341-343. See also Fischer, op. cit., pp. 628-629, 635ff. See also Görlitz, op. cit., pp. 405-406.

⁸⁷ Deist, op. cit., p. 364. His source is BA/MA, Operations-Kriegstagebuch des K.d.H., 15.10.1918, (Operations-War Diary High Seas Fleet Command, entry for 15 Oct 1918).

⁸⁸ Horn, op. cit., p. 206, from BA/MA, F 4055/PG 64726, K.T.B. der S.K.L., 15 Oct 1918, (War Diary of the Naval High Command).

Unlike Scheer, Hipper at this time seems more concerned about national than naval honour. Reacting to President Wilson's answer to the latest German diplomatic note,⁸⁹ Hipper wrote:

He is unbelievably adamant and has thrown a bomb at us. From this it appears that we must give up the monarchy or at least the Kaiser and the Crown Prince...what will then become of Germany cannot predict with certainty. Surely its honour will founder.

Indeed, the German situation was precarious. On 16 October the British occupied all the former German naval positions on the Flanders Front and the fleet chief of staff, Admiral von Trotha, knew that the navy was not necessarily ready, either in materiel or personnel,⁹⁰ for any kind of decisive action. This contrasts with Holger Herwig's assertion⁹¹ that Trotha was optimistic. Nonetheless, Scheer desired to keep his options open and when he and Levetzow, his chief of staff, saw the Kaiser on the 18th Scheer told the Emperor that '...in the event we are forced to give up U-boat warfare the fleet will become available for other tasks,'⁹² words Scheer used in 1926 to justify his assertion he had told the Kaiser about the last battle.

⁸⁹ Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 9/4, 17 Oct 1918.

⁹⁰ Deist, op.cit., p. 344.

⁹¹ Herwig, op.cit., p. 254.

⁹² Scheer, Vom Segelschiff, op.cit., p. 355; Horn, op.cit., p. 207. Cf. Gladisch, op.cit., pp. 336ff.

Scheer and Ludendorff saw the Kaiser again on the 19th and he told them the formal decision on whether or not to renew U-boat warfare would have to be taken by the government, not him.⁹³ Prince Max refused to resume U-boat warfare because he did not want the negotiations broken off.⁹⁴ Scheer told Prince Max he had the 'fullest loyalty of the navy which would be demonstrated by the recall of the U-boats,' as Max had ordered. Scheer also told him that 'The High Seas Fleet is now relieved of its tasks of covering the U-boat war and has regained its operational freedom.'⁹⁵

The German national position continued to deteriorate. On 21 October there was revolution in Vienna, capital of Germany's largest ally.⁹⁶ The same day Hipper received word of Max's order to give up U-boat warfare and he noted that 'This points to the final attack by the fleet.'⁹⁷

⁹³ Ibid, 9/5, 20 Oct 1918. See also Gladisch, op. cit., p. 337.

⁹⁴ Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 49, Frames 00744ff, Conferences of 16, 17, 18, and 20 Oct 1918. See Deist, op. cit., p. 356.

⁹⁵ Deist, *ibid*, loc. cit.

⁹⁶ Czisnik, op. cit., p. 650.

⁹⁷ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/6, 20 Oct 1918. Cf. K.T.B. des K.d.H., op. cit., entry for 21 Oct 1918.

Indeed, on 22 October, according to several sources,
⁹⁸
 Hipper received an order from Captain Levetzow in the
 Naval High Command:

High Seas forces to go to the offensive
 and should be set against the English fleet.

Levetzow asserted on 25 October that Scheer assumed
⁹⁹
 full responsibility for the order confirmed in writing
 in the War Diary of the Naval High Command. Much later,
 in a letter to the editors of the Süddeutsche Monatshefte,
 Levetzow was even more specific:

The Naval High Command, whose chief of
 staff I was, was the highest-placed naval command
 of the Fleet, and their chief of staff was
 Admiral von Trotha. For the attack by the fleet
 the Naval High Command gave the order to the fleet.
 Admiral Scheer and I as its responsible chief of
 staff therefore carry the full responsibility.¹⁰⁰

The man who actually wrote the fleet operations order
 on 22 October when Levetzow called the fleet staff and told
 them to draft the plan as quickly as possible was Commander
 Hintzmann, Hipper's assistant chief of staff for operations.
 Comdr. Hintzmann's version of the background of this order
 was published in January 1919 in a Wilhelmshaven newspaper.

⁹⁸ Gladisch, op. cit., p. 338; Nachlass Levetzow, Reel 49, Frames 00761ff., 21-22 Oct 1918; Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/8, 22 Oct 1918; Deist, 'Die Politik der Seekriegsleitung', op. cit., p. 359.

⁹⁹ Deist, op. cit., pp. 357-358, n.37.

¹⁰⁰ Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 46, Frames 00051ff, Levetzow to the editors of Süddeutsche Monatshefte, 19 Aug 1924.

He wrote¹⁰¹ in part:

On receipt of information early in October of the serious threat to the Flanders Front, the C-in-C decided to take the offensive with the whole fleet to relieve the right wing of the army, either directly by inflicting damage on the enemy on his traffic route from the Thames to Flanders, or indirectly by the threat to this traffic which the offensive would involve. General weather conditions (bad weather during the whole of September which prevented mine-sweeping, and bright nights) and the military situation did not permit this offensive to be undertaken before the end of October.

Indeed Hipper waited until the end of October because he was determined the operation should be undertaken at the right time and under proper circumstances to assure¹⁰² a modicum of success, a professional attitude which does not seem to support the charge¹⁰³ the last battle was a 'suicide sortie.' The critics further charge¹⁰⁴ that Hipper and the naval command were so obsessed with naval honour that they undertook the sortie in rebellion against the government. Two important questions arise: was Hipper involved in an 'admirals' rebellion' in carrying out the order for a fleet sortie in October 1918, and, was his sense of honour so

¹⁰¹ P.R.O., Adm 137/3891, Hintzmann, op.cit., p. 1. Cf. n.72 supra.

¹⁰² Nachlass Levetzow, op.cit., Reel 46, Frame 00764, Levetzow's record of conference on 22 Oct 1918. See also K.T.B. des K.d.H., op.cit., loc.cit., n.99 supra.

¹⁰³ Horn, op.cit., p. 209; see also WUA, vol.ix, Part I, op.cit., Dittmann's testimony, pp. 105ff. citing 14 seamen and stokers who believed it was a suicide sortie and an admirals' rebellion.

¹⁰⁴ Horn, op.cit., p.221; WUA, op.cit., loc.cit.

over-riding as to cause him to order a suicide mission?

In discussing the 'admirals' rebellion' it is relevant to record that Hipper was told by Levetzow that Scheer had informed the Chancellor about the fleet having regained its operational freedom. Despite Hipper's assertion that 'the High Seas Fleet is such an important factor' of national power that 'the Fleet C-in-C should not commit it' without 'a decision from higher places,' Scheer did not inform Prince Max of the intended mission.¹⁰⁵ It is difficult to ascertain beyond a reasonable doubt whether or not Hipper knew Scheer had withheld information on the sortie itself from the Chancellor. It is known that Lt. Cdr. Ernst Weizsäcker, Naval High Command briefing officer for Scheer and Levetzow, thought 'that Admiral Scheer had won the Reich-Chancellor's approval of the plan on grounds of honour.'¹⁰⁶ Max himself says he would in all likelihood approved had he been informed and that 'the navy's lack of confidence in me was unjustified.'¹⁰⁷

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Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 46, Frame 00764.
See note 102 supra.

106 Prince Max of Baden, The Memoirs of Prince Max von Baden, (New York, 1928), p. 282.

107 Hill, ed., Die Weizsäcker Papiere, MSS, 1918, entry for 28 Oct 1918.

108 Prince Max of Baden, op. cit., p. 283. Cf. Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey, Die Regierung des Prinzen Max von Baden, (Düsseldorf, 1962), pp. liii, on the historiography of the memoirs and p. 470 for mention of the mutiny and that Hipper was Fleet C-in-C at the time.

Scheer says he did not inform the Chancellor for fear
of a security leak...¹⁰⁹

Hipper's entry in his war journal for 26 October 1918 shows he was aware of Scheer and Hindenburg's conference the previous evening with Deputy Chancellor von Payer in Berlin. He notes they were turned down in their attempt to have the government reject the armistice terms set forth by President Wilson.¹¹⁰ That day Hipper had sent his aide de camp, Lt. Grimm, to Grand Headquarters with the fleet operations plan for the proposed sortie to have it evaluated and approved.¹¹¹ Scheer approved the plan and it was returned to Hipper on 28 October. Deist makes much of the fact that neither the Chancellor nor the Kaiser were consulted in this matter and cites the constitutional changes which took place on the 28th of October as the basis for the necessity of informing the Chancellor.¹¹² These changes included the transfer of supreme military authority from the Kaiser to the Chancellor.

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Scheer, Vom Segelschiff, op. cit., p. 356.

110 Nachlass Hipper, 9/8, 26 Oct 1918. Cf. Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 49, Frames 00764ff., Conference in Berlin, 25 Oct 1918. See also Deist, Militär und Innenpolitik, op. cit., pp. 1338-1340.

111 Nachlass Hipper, loc. cit. Cf. Deist, 'Die Politik der Seekriegsleitung,' op. cit., p. 361.

112 Deist, 'Die Unruhen in der Marine 1917/18,' op. cit., p. 341 n.74.

But other sources disagree with Deist. Arthur Rosenberg said naval and military authorities were not bound to ask permission of the civil government before each individual action.¹¹³ Documents¹¹⁴ on the establishment of the Naval High Command in August 1918 show Scheer had authority to order fleet sorties 'in concert with the chief of the General Staff' and was given total control¹¹⁵ over Germany's naval warfare effort. Herwig says the 'Kaiser was excluded from active control over naval policy.'¹¹⁶ Ritter says Levetzow told the deputy chief of the Kaiser's naval cabinet 'it was a project not requiring the Kaiser's authorization.'¹¹⁷ A.J. Ryder commented 'The admirals had been technically within their rights in planning the move, but politically and psychologically it was a blunder.'¹¹⁸ Thus from a strictly legal viewpoint, it would appear Hipper was not involved in an 'admirals' rebellion:' Scheer had the authority under the constitution to order the sortie, Levetzow, his chief of staff, had authority to issue the order to Hipper, Fleet C-in-C, and Hipper was told by Levetzow that the Chancellor, Prince Max, had been informed.

¹¹³ Arthur Rosenberg, Imperial Germany, op.cit., p. 265.

¹¹⁴ BA/MA, F 33021d/PG 66705/Reel 540, Organisation des Admiralstabs der Marine, vol. 5, ca.30 Aug 1918, Service Regulations for the Chief of the Admiralty Staff.

¹¹⁵ Walther Hubatsch, Der Admiralstab, op.cit., p. 178.

¹¹⁶ Herwig, op.cit., p. 236.

¹¹⁷ Ritter, op.cit., vol.iv, p. 380.

¹¹⁸ A.J. Ryder, op.cit., p. 140

Hipper's ordering of a 'suicide mission' for the sake of honour is dubious because he insisted on some latitude in deciding the time and duration of the sortie. The fleet was not simply going to sail to Scapa Flow and throw down the gauntlet to the British. The plan itself is the best evidence to indicate Hipper's thinking was that of a naval commander.¹¹⁹ His plan was to take the main fleet into the English Channel off the Belgian coast, detatch light cruisers to raid the Thames Estuary and battle cruisers to attack the traffic off Belgium and France. His mine laying cruisers were to lay an additional protective field directly to the north of him; his bows were protected from envelopment by the vast minefields in the German Bight. Beatty was to be drawn over several U-boat lines. It is known that the British fleet C-in-C intended to grapple with Hipper at all costs; by Beatty's own estimation this would cost the Grand Fleet at least seven battleships but he expected to annihilate Hipper.¹²⁰ Indeed there is substantial evidence that British capital ship construction prior to the Queen Elizabeth class was dangerously weak in underwater

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Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 50, Frames 00506-00510. See also Gladisch, op. cit., pp. 344-347. See also Friedrich Ruge, Scapa Flow 1919, The End of the German Fleet, (London, 1973), p. 159.

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Marder, op. cit., vol. v, p. 172 n.11; *ibid*, p. 178.

¹²¹ protection. The Germans realized this. ¹²² It is also true there were 8 American dreadnoughts and 80 destroyers in European waters. ¹²³ But Holger Herwig's ¹²⁴ assumption that they could all have been brought to bear on Hipper does not consider the practical difficulties of concentration: three of the battleships were at Bantry Bay, at least a day's steaming from the northern channel, and scores of destroyers were dispersed around the Atlantic littoral protecting convoys. The most useful force would have been the five dreadnoughts of the Sixth Battle Squadron with the Grand Fleet. Time was critical for Hipper as the longer he was out the more force could be assembled against him. There was also the matter of German and British shell. The British now had technological superiority as well as a vastly heavier broadside ¹²⁵ but there was also the possibility the Germans would have used gas shell, ¹²⁶ with the results unpredictable.

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National Maritime Museum, Adm 138/413-416, Iron Duke class Ships' Covers. See also Oscar Parkes, British Battleships, op. cit., Chapters 85, 86, 88, 90, 91, 95, 97, 'Protection.'

122 Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 49, Frame 00350, Levetzow to Kaiser Wilhelm II, ca. Aug 1918.

123 Herwig, op. cit., p. 249.

124 Ibid, loc. cit.

125 See Part II of this work, notes 78-85.

126 Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/4-5, 18-19 Oct 1918.

Nonetheless, Lt. Cdr. Weiszsäcker, Scheer's briefing officer who read the final draft of the plan, said there was a '50 per cent chance of no result, 40 per cent of a lucky result, and 10 per cent disastrous result.'¹²⁷ With the odds nine to one, it would seem the planned sortie was a reasonable risk from a tactical point of view. It was an operation by a numerically inferior fleet hedged about by the influence of underwater weapons. But in the light of what Hipper knew about the reliability of his men and their officers, and what Trotha told Scheer about the fleet's lack of battle readiness, Hipper's judgment in ordering the sortie was a gross miscalculation. Yet it is also unrealistic to have expected him not to try when the possible rewards are considered. A naval success of any kind could well have strengthened the German position in the armistice negotiations and according to Prince Max, had a tremendous impact on the deteriorating German home front.¹²⁸ As for a 'glorious defeat,' Max said:

This sacrifice would have been a moral force, capable of putting to shame the many disaffected and despairing folk who would not have been able to escape its influence. I have been justly reminded of Thermopylae.

¹²⁷

Hill, ed., op. cit., 1918, entry for 27-28 Oct.

¹²⁸

Prince Max of Baden, op. cit., p. 283.

However, on 25 October Hipper received another indication of the instability present in the fleet from Vice Admiral Mauve,¹²⁹ commander of the Fourth Battle Squadron. Upon being ordered to return to the North Sea from the Baltic, Mauve appealed to Hipper for an extra three days so he could give his crews the home leave he had promised them. They had performed their drills in an excellent manner on the basis of this promise, according to Mauve, so Hipper reluctantly granted permission. The Fourth Battle Squadron was to arrive in Wilhelmshaven by 29 October but because of heavy fog they did not arrive until the 30th.¹³⁰ The same fog caused postponement of the planned fleet sortie from 29 to 30 October but on the night of the 30th the sortie was cancelled because of open mutiny in the First Battle Squadron.

Hipper's actions and thoughts on the last battle are those of a highly competent naval commander. He produced the plan and directed the operation. The plan, was feasible and offered the chance, at acceptable odds, for major military and political gain. It reflected a degree of common sense rare in the Imperial Navy in the

¹²⁹ BA/MA, F 4070/PG 64915/Reel 350, Revolution 1918, op.cit., Vice Admiral Mauve to Trotha, July 1919, Mauve's report on the mutiny and revolution. Cf. USNA, PG 62436, Reel 211, K.T.B. des K.d.H., op.cit., entry for 25 Oct 1918.

¹³⁰ USNA, PG 62436/Reel 211, K.T.B. des K.d.H., op.cit., entry for 29 Oct 1918.

latter half of 1918. Honor may well have played a key role in the genesis of the plan but for Hipper, it was a lesser consideration, a derivative of the plan and not a main objective. Hipper desired to engage the enemy under the best terms: the Germans had the ability to say when and where the action would take place. That Hipper's actions in producing the plan, assembling the fleet and attempting the sortie failed was but another manifestation of events in Germany itself. The moment was right for mutiny, rebellion and collapse. Again, Hipper was between the upper and lower stones--the reality of national defeat conflicted with his sense of duty to do everything possible with his command until the end.

Rebellion

The rebellion of the crews of the German battle fleet began as they were assembling on 28 and 29 October for Hipper's planned operation. An engine room rating in the battleship Kaiserin of the Fourth Battle Squadron has described the progress of Maue's ships toward the fleet rendezvous which was delayed by fog on the 29th:

Coaling commenced as soon as the coal lighters got alongside but a disinclination to work was clearly noticeable, for no one could see the object of the proceedings. This feeling was considerably heightened by the fact that none of our superiors gave a satisfactory explanation ...About an hour later we passed through the lock and at 5 P.M. anchored in Schilling Roads where we beheld an interesting spectacle of the entire High Seas Fleet at anchor. This meant that some secret undertaking had been planned...that not one

of our ships would have returned from this engagement was patent to all of us, for the entire strength of the enemy forces had been concentrated in the south of England.

Petty Officer Kiehn,¹³¹ the author of this excerpt, knew only slightly less than his squadron commander. Indeed Mauve's ships had arrived too late to allow the operation to be carried out on the 29th; Mauve did not know about the sortie until 1530 on the 30th when he was told it was not a drill.¹³² The forces which were in the North Sea, however, were informed by their commanding officers who were at the conference aboard the fleet flagship Baden on the night of 29 October. Rear Admiral Boedicker, chief of the First Battle Squadron, in his account of that conference, notes that Hipper was told it was possible the ships' crews would not obey the order to go out; there had been rumours of a revolution circulating in Wilhelmshaven for the previous fortnight, and also a rumour of a fleet battle.¹³³

¹³¹ P.R.O, Adm 137/3849, 'Translation of Extract from a diary written by Obermaschinistenmaat (Engine Room Petty Officer First Class) E. Kiehn, battleship Kaiserin, while interned in Scapa Flow, pp.2-4, n.d.

¹³² BA/MA, F 4070, Mauve's report, op.cit., 28-30 Oct 1918.

¹³³ BA/MA, F 4070/PG74914/Reel 350, Aufzeichnungen des Vizeadmirals Boedicker s. Zeit Chef des I Geschwaders über den Ausbruch der Revolution in der Marine (Recollections of Vice Admiral Boedicker on the Outbreak of the Revolution in the Navy at the time of his command of the First Battle Squadron), ca. July 1918, pp. 1-2.

On the night of 29-30 October the ships of the Third Battle Squadron--S.M.S. König, Bayern, Grosser Kurfürst, Markgraf and Kronprinz Wilhelm--all manifested signs of insubordination and rebellion. Hipper signalled 'fleet drill cancelled' later that night to get the crews in hand.¹³⁴ Admiral Mauve reported that Hipper held another conference on the afternoon of the 30th during which Mauve said his men had shown considerable opposition to the fleet sortie but the commanders put forward no new opinions or solutions.¹³⁵ At 2200 major disturbances developed in the battleships Helgoland and Thüringen. Boedicker, their squadron commander, was aboard the fleet flagship Baden at the time and Hipper ordered him to 'clean it up.'¹³⁶ Boedicker noted Thüringen had been one of his best ships and after consulting with Capt. Windemuller, the commanding officer, he decided to go to the ship himself. His initial impression from Windemuller was that the situation was not too bad but upon arriving at the ship, he found 'the crew wholly rabid; nothing more could be reckoned from the good men.' He therefore ordered up a torpedoboat, a U-boat, a steamer and a company of marines, and after a cliff-hanging

¹³⁴ BA/MA, F 4070, op.cit., Bericht Kapitän Hintzmann, (Report of the Senior Admiralty Staff Officer, Fleet Staff), pl.

¹³⁵ BA/MA, F 4070, op.cit., Mauve's Report, op.cit., 30 Oct 1918.

¹³⁶ BA/MA, F 4070, op.cit., Boedicker's Report, pp. 3-7.

confrontation, the mutineers who had blockaded themselves below decks, surrendered. The process was repeated with the Helgoland.¹³⁷

Daniel Horn criticizes Hipper for not giving an order in writing to the U-boat commander to sink the mutinous ships. It was hardly necessary, however, as both torpedoboats and U-boat were under the operational command of the squadron commander who had full authority to deal with the situation. A record was in fact kept of Hipper's commands to Boedicker and Boedicker's commands to the torpedoboat and the U-boat.¹³⁸ Boedicker's report¹³⁹ to Hipper indicates that the first officer of Thüringen was relieved and placed under criminal arrest ashore; both captains were relieved but no charges were preferred. Hipper wanted to keep the number of arrested men to a minimum and requested¹⁴⁰ the squadron commander single out the agitators. This was done but the collapse was well underway by the time the administrative action was completed.

¹³⁷ Ibid, loc. cit.

¹³⁸ The action was recorded in Hipper's official war diary, K.T.B. des K.d.H., op. cit., 30 Oct 1918, 2300ff.

¹³⁹ BA/MA, F 4070/PG 64914/Reel 349, Boedicker to Hipper, 1 Nov 1918, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Loc. cit., Hipper to Boedicker, 2 Nov 1918.

Hipper did not simply sit on his prerogatives, however, after such serious disturbances; he tried to restore the credibility of the naval service in the eyes of the men and issued a remarkable document for distribution to all commanding officers. It was to be read to all crews on 30 October.

Appeal of Admiral Ritter von Hipper to the Enlisted Personnel of the High Seas Fleet after the Outbreak of Mutiny

30.10.1918, Wilhelmshaven

It is apparently the opinion of some of the ships' crews that the endeavours for peace have brought the struggle on the western front to an end, and also that the navy would no longer be required to fight.

The rumour has also surfaced that the officers of the navy desire a battle with a superior enemy such that the fleet would be shot to pieces and therefore not be surrendered with the armistice.

They are incorrect opinions, they are untrue rumours.

No one wants an unprofitable battle which would only permit the enemy to sink our ships. We all want the peace. In any case, it is not far away.

Read the newspapers, read the army reports, ours and those of our enemies! New enemy formations with heavy support are continuously attacking our land front. The enemy shows no will for peace yet; rather they would break through our front, destroy us, and lay waste to our homeland. Daily and hourly our army fights in stubborn defence and makes powerful counter-attacks against the enemy. Also, the enemy is assembling off our coasts in our North Sea home waters to achieve a breakthrough. The call from the Royal Navy grows ever louder: no peace lest their superiority over the German fleet is demonstrated and the glory of the Skagerrak refuted.

We would not send the fleet out frivolously to satisfy the enemy's desire for our destruction. But we must be ready, with our spirit, our ships and our weapons to defend the German North Sea coasts exactly as the army does this on the western front through tenacious defence and effective counter-attack which itself gives us the opportunity to damage the enemy. Furthermore, we must aid our U-boats, our minesweepers, torpedoboats and all small fighting craft whose work is the hardest in all weathers. We must give them added protection and support.

We wish peace. In this we are united: government and people, officers and men. But he who relaxes does not aid peace; he only promotes the lust of our enemies for our lives, our property, our total destruction. He who slackens now will allow this to happen, to debilitate the forces is to stamp himself a traitor before himself and his country. Think, strengthen yourselves against evil and untrue rumours: they come from our enemies. Seek support from your officers who themselves rely on you!

We all stand directly before the enemy, no one more protected than the other. So we have stood during the four years of war now gone by. So stand all who have won and who have died, at Coronel, the Falklands, the Skaggerak, those of the cruiser squadron, those of the fleet, as have the many valiant of the U-boat fought through and through. We can all help one another not to falter, avoid becoming cowards to our comrades before our homeland. Everybody have the courage to confront insane and subversively intended rumours and incitement!

We want no useless sacrifice before the upcoming peace, but we desire to stand by the gates of the homeland with sharpened sword and undivided unity until that peace is actually there. The country depends on that, and we owe her no less than to keep everything ready to the end.

141

(s) v Hipper.

141 Deist, Militär und Innenpolitik, op. cit., pp.1348-1350. For another citation of this document see Horn, op. cit., p. 223. For distribution, see Deist, op. cit., p. 1348, n.2.

In ordering the distribution of this appeal on the 30th of October Hipper made his first fleet-wide attempt to counter the problems facing the German navy inherent in the defeat of 1918. The appeal appears to have been ineffective,¹⁴² as the men simply no longer believed their officers.¹⁴³ The next day Hipper decided after another conference with his flag officers to disperse the fleet.¹⁴⁴ He wanted to keep it all in North Sea ports, however, but Admiral Kraft, commander of the Third Battle Squadron, appealed to him asserting, 'I know my men...they can be got back in hand if we go to Kiel...because we are meeting them half way in a humane manner.'¹⁴⁵ Hipper agreed as did his other commanders with the exception of¹⁴⁶ Commodore Heinrich of the torpedoboats. The First Battle Squadron was assigned outpost duty, the Fourth Battle Squadron and the First Scouting Group sent to sea to support local minesweeping operations. Hipper concluded

142

Deist, op. cit., p. 1349, n.4.

143

Report of Petty Officer Kiehn, op. cit., pp. 5-6. See also WUA, vol. ix, part I, pp. 111-119. Fourteen seamen testified in all. See also Czisnik, op. cit., pp. 652-653.

144 BA/MA, F 4070, Mauve's Report, op. cit., entry for 31 Oct; Heinrich's Report, op. cit., entry for 31 Oct; Nachlass Hipper, 9/10, 31 Oct 1918.

145

WUA, vol. ix, part I, pp. 485-486. See also Horn, op. cit., p. 225.

146

Heinrich, op. cit., loc. cit. supra.

he should give up any further thoughts of offensive action because 'If the men continue to disobey, it would be necessary to take drastic steps which would lead to a catastrophe of major proportions.'¹⁴⁷ Hipper sent Lt. Yorck of the Fleet staff to Grand Headquarters with an explanation of the events of 30-31 October with the additional message that he intended to order a torpedo-boat sortie and in general wait until the situation clarified itself.¹⁴⁸ Yorck saw Levetzow who condemned Hipper for not sinking the mutinous ships out of hand.¹⁴⁹ Obviously, the High Command's methods for dealing with mutiny varied from Hipper's; their idea was to arm officers and trusted petty officers to secure control of each ship.¹⁵⁰ However, this method required the 'officers know their men,' but as one seaman has said, there was a virtual Chinese wall between the officers and the men.¹⁵¹

147

Horn, op. cit., p. 224, from Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., Reel 50, Frames 00562ff., report of Lt. Yorck to Levetzow from Hipper 1 Nov 1918.

148 Ibid, loc. cit.

149 Nachlass Levetzow, op. cit., loc. cit., Levetzow's personal observation following Yorck's report 1 Nov 1918.

150 Herwig, op. cit., p. 256 n.3 from the Diary of Lt. Comdr. Bogislav von Selchow, 24 Oct 1918, also cited in Deist, op. cit., p. 1349 n.4.

151 Horn, ed., The Private War of Seaman Stumpf, op. cit., pp. 246ff.

There can be little doubt that any attempt to deal with rebellion on a ship by ship basis, as the High Command recommended, would not have worked; it was tried in battleship Kaiserin and frustrated by lack of petty officer support.¹⁵² Hipper's concern about a 'catastrophe' was probably justified; in any case, he believed he handled the situation correctly.¹⁵³ Scheer recognized the lack of communications between officers and men in the fleet and therefore gave Hipper power to draw on the U-boats and naval schools for officers to replace those in the big ships.¹⁵⁴

On 2 November Hipper's formal situation report to the high command included a request that the high command indicate publicly that naval officers supported the government.¹⁵⁵ Hipper also said he thought fleet problems were connected to a Bolshevist uprising and more serious efforts were required: the decommissioning of certain ships and a far-reaching change in officers. Meanwhile, in Wilhelmshaven

152

Kiehn, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

153

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/11, 31 Oct 1918.

154

Horn, op. cit., p. 227, from Nachlass Levetzow, loc.cit. Cf. Hipper's recommendation that closer relations be developed between officers and men after summer 1917 mutiny, Part II, n.113 in this work. Scheer's command rejected the idea.

155

Deist, op. cit., p.1358-1360. Deist asserts this was not from Hipper, ignoring the evidence in Hipper's Nachlass, 9/12, 3 Nov 1918 that Hipper had ordered such a report sent the previous day.

the citizens were inciting sailors in the torpedoboats¹⁵⁶ and U-boats to join the revolution, according to Hipper. This is the first time the word is used in his personal journal in connection with the 1918 events. 'Rebellion' or organized opposition to those in authority probably became 'revolution' when the sailors' aims turned from opposition to the last sortie to rejection of the officer corps's authority, intrinsic in imperial Germany's society.¹⁵⁷ As Hannah Arendt says:¹⁵⁸

...Revolution itself does not spring from a theoretical interest in a wholly perfect social order so much as from an urgent desire to find some viable alternative to conditions that are felt intolerable.

Revolution

In essence, Hipper attempted the well-nigh impossible in those last weeks of World War I. With a psychologically defeated navy whose officer corps had deteriorated badly, he tried first to strike a final decisive blow at the enemy. Failing this, he attempted to rally the fleet so German defences on the North Sea front remained effective. To some extent, this was achieved by his dispersal order

156

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/12, 2 Nov 1918.

157 Deist, 'Die Unruhen in der Marine, 1917/18,' op. cit., p. 342.

158 Hannah Arendt, On Revolution, (New York, 1965), p. 8.

after the first outbreaks. Also, with his remarkable appeal to the crews, he tried to restore trust between officers and men although it would seem his words never reached the crews. And he tried to keep the naval mutiny from turning into a bloodbath. In this Hipper succeeded.

In addressing the question of whether any of Hipper's actions helped trigger the German revolution of 1918, it is necessary to review the chronology of collapse. On 3 November, between 3,000 and 5,000 sailors marched on the naval prison in Kiel to liberate their comrades of the 1917 mutiny and those arrested within the last few days. Among the mob were sailors from the Third Battle Squadron whose admiral had requested Hipper only a few days before they be allowed to ^{return to} their home port of Kiel. The mob was halted temporarily by a navy patrol but 8 sailors were killed and 39 wounded. Admiral Sauchon, the governor of Kiel, requested 600 troops from the nearby garrison of Altona but when the first contingent arrived, they were disarmed by the rebellious sailors without a fight.¹⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Hipper returned to his old headquarters ship, Kaiser Wilhelm II in Wilhelmshaven where he was visited by Capt. Magnus von Levetzow, Scheer's chief of staff. Hipper gave him this account of the fleet situation:

¹⁵⁹ Czisnik, op. cit., p. 658. See also Gustav Adolph Noske, Von Kiel bis Kapp, (Berlin, 1920), p. 10ff.

...any offensive action at the time is out of the question and I am not in a position to guarantee the defence of the German Bight.¹⁶⁰

While Hipper was talking with Levetzow, they observed the spectacle of the battle cruisers von der Tann and Derfflinger being forced into harbour by their crews. The commanding officers of the two ships and Admiral von Reuter, Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, came to see Hipper, requesting to be relieved of their posts.as they felt they could not get the crews to go out to sea again. Hipper decided to send the captains back to their ships with orders to proceed the next day to Altenbruch Roads to anchor. As to von Reuter, Hipper said 'there was nothing else I could do but give my loyal colleague of four years the stool by the door to sit on.'¹⁶¹ The next morning the two ships carried out Hipper's order.

On 4 November Hipper clearly recognized the problem of enforcing any kind of authority in this period and issued a secret fleet order to all officers.¹⁶² It told them quite specifically that their authority was personal in nature because of the deteriorating situation and could only be maintained by consistency and courage in the face

¹⁶⁰ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/12, 3 Nov 1918. Cf. Nachlass Levetzow, Reel 50, Frame 00573, Levetzow's account of the conference, 3 Nov 1918.

¹⁶¹ Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/13, 3 Nov 1918.

¹⁶² WUA, vol. ix, part I, p. 431, Secret Fleet Order of 4 Nov 1918.

of confusion and discord. Personal example was also critical and the officers were to do everything to prevent sabotage. Hipper also felt the Workers and Soldiers Councils could probably be 'managed,' as most of the men were unsure of their goals. The Bolsheviks were responsible for the troubles, according to Hipper, their aim was clear, and the revolution had to be deflected from it. He suggested several specific ways to restore or maintain discipline.

When Hipper received information on 4 November that the crew of the Markgraf had deserted en masse and that they and other sailors had proceeded to the naval prison at Kiel, he ordered the Third Battle Squadron to sail but they were incapable of getting underway. He was furious at Admiral Kraft, the S.O., of Markgraf's squadron, and exclaimed: 'I would hope Kraft is also a casualty after having served me this foul soup.'¹⁶³ The same day Hipper noted that 1,000 troops had been ordered for Wilhelmshaven and 2,000 for Kiel. He also said:¹⁶⁴

The next days got worse and worse and all was lost because of the unlucky sortie which was ordered by the Naval High Command.

The revolution broke out in Wilhelmshaven on 5 November 1918. Hipper was in communication with Admiral Krosigk,

163

Nachlass Hipper, op. cit., 9/14, 4 Nov 1918.

164

Ibid, loc. cit.

the commandant of the North Sea Naval Station in Wilhelmshaven, contrary to Horn's assertion.¹⁶⁵ Hipper and Krosigk agreed there was nothing either could do as no troops had arrived from Hamburg and they had only 200 loyal men.¹⁶⁶ The nearest garrison, Bremen, had also gone over to the revolution. There were 35,000 armed sailors now wandering about Wilhelmshaven, the red flag was flying over the naval station barracks and Soldiers Councils had been established aboard the ships of the First Battle Squadron commanded by Admiral Boedicker.¹⁶⁷ By 6 November, the Wilhelmshaven Naval Station was 'totally in the hands of the revolutionaries.'¹⁶⁸ He therefore ordered all loyal officers and men from the ships in harbour to assemble in the Baden, his flagship.¹⁶⁹ At noon a sailors' delegation was received from the Baden's crew and Hipper's reaction shows considerable political acumen:

¹⁶⁵ See Horn, op.cit., p. 263. Cf. Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 9/14, 5 Nov 1918.

¹⁶⁶ Horn, op.cit., pp. 261-262.

¹⁶⁷ Nachlass Hipper, op.cit., 9/14, 5 Nov 1918. See also Deist, Militär und Innenpolitik, op.cit., pp. 1372-; 374, especially n. 6.

¹⁶⁸ Nachlass Hipper, loc.cit., 6 Nov 1918.

¹⁶⁹ For copy of signal see Deist, op.cit., p. 1374, n.6. See also P.R.O. Adm 137/3892, Intelligence Division Wireless Intercept of Hipper's signal.

A commission from Baden came to see me to take up negotiations. Because their proposals were obviously mild, a resistance would only have unleashed a bloodbath. I conceded to their wishes, also with the intent of keeping the revolution under control.¹⁷⁰

Hipper was following a consistent approach of conciliation and moderation. He was in little position to do otherwise; the burghers of Bremen had released the mutineers from Thüringen and Helgoland.¹⁷¹ The First Scouting Group and the Fourth Battle Squadron were at sea and all bases had hoisted the red flag so these ships, without a place to land, established Soldiers Councils.¹⁷² By 7 November Heligoland Island, the German fortress of the central North Sea, had gone over to the revolution as had the cities of Hamburg and Lübeck. Another indication of the deteriorating military situation was the increasingly confused communications between the fleet and the high command, e.g. the order to Hipper to court martial Commodore Karpf for unauthorized decommissioning of his ships. Hipper¹⁷³ refused because his information showed the high command in error.¹⁷⁴ British wireless intercept confirms Hipper was right.

¹⁷⁰ Nachlass Hipper, 9/14-15, 6 Nov 1918.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 9/15, 7 Nov 1918.

¹⁷² Ibid, loc.cit. See also Mauve's report, op.cit., entry for 7 Nov 1918. See also P.R.O., Adm 137/3892, I.D. Report, Wireless Intercept North Sea, 7 Nov, p. 4.

¹⁷³ Nachlass Hipper, 9/15, 7 Nov 1918.

¹⁷⁴ P.R.O, Adm 137/3892, I.D. Report, Baltic, 7 Nov, p.4.

In Germany itself, the revolution in Munich toppled the Wittelsbach dynasty of 800 years standing in a development¹⁷⁵ totally unrelated to the fleet mutinies. In Hamburg, the revolution had local origins as well and the participation of naval elements was peripheral, at least at the outset.¹⁷⁶ In Kiel the city commandant was murdered and Admiral Souchon, governor of Kiel and the commandant of the Baltic Naval Station, and most of his officers, were held captive by revolutionaries for a night. Prince Heinrich, the Kaiser's brother, was nearly assassinated¹⁷⁷ escaping Kiel. Reichstag Deputy Gustav Adolph Noske, the 'good socialist,' and Deputy Conrad Haussmann arrived in Kiel on 4 November, sent there by Prince Max in response to an appeal from Souchon. Noske assumed the governorship and as much authority as he could garner.¹⁷⁸

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Allan Mitchell, Revolution in Bavaria 1918-1919, (Princeton, 1965), pp. 75-110.

176 Richard A. Comfort, Revolutionary Hamburg, (Stanford, 1966), pp. 36ff. News of the Kiel revolt sparked the Hamburg workers into far more serious revolutionary demands and were symptomatic of the national situation.

177 Herwig, op. cit., p. 259. His source is the Nachlass Souchon.

178 A.J. Ryder, The German Revolution of 1918, op.cit., pp. 141-142; A. Rosenberg, op. cit., pp. 266-267; Deist, op.cit., pp. 1380-1384, Report by Noske on Situation in Kiel 7 Nov 1918. See also P.R.O., Adm 137/3892, I.D. Report Baltic, op. cit pp. 2-6 for interesting summary of signals sent by Noske to naval units from 7-11 Nov 1918 as 'Commissar of Naval Affairs.'

Kiel was back to normal in a few days although the performance of the officers in the Third Battle Squadron had been abominable as was that of most of the officers in the navy's other big ships. Only about 16 of more than 400 officers in the big ships in the Baltic are recorded in a secret naval document as having remained at their posts.¹⁷⁹

By 9 November the situation in Wilhelmshaven had further deteriorated and Hipper personally hauled down his admiral's flag from Baden's mainmast. He went ashore in protest over the Soldiers Council's insistence that the red flag be flown on all warships. Hipper said he would return only if there was an emergency.¹⁸⁰ This same day the Kaiser abdicated, Prince Max became temporary head of state, and Friedrich Ebert became Chancellor. Also on 9 November Hipper received information indicating the British had sent two light cruisers and a destroyer squadron to 'scout the terrain' before a major attack.¹⁸¹

179

BA/MA, F 4070/PG 64916/Reel 350, Revolution 1918, op.cit., Befehlshaber der Sicherung der Ostsee, (Commander, Baltic Watch Forces), 26 Nov 1918, Confidential and Personal to Chief of the Admiralty Staff.

180 Nachlass Hipper, 9/16, 9 Nov 1918. See also BA/MA, F 890/PG 78071, Soldatenrat Baden, (Soldiers Council Records S.M.S. Baden), 9 Nov 1918.

181 Nachlass Hipper, loc. cit.; see also Woodward, op.cit., p.168. See also BA/MA, F 4070/PG 64914/Reel 350, K.T.B. der II.A.G., (Excerpt, War Diary of the Second Scouting Group), Entry for 1156 A.M. 9 Nov 1918.

Commodore Victor Harder, who at Jutland had commanded Hipper's flagship, the Lützow, sortied with two ships of his Second Scouting Group to check the report on orders of Hipper. No support was forthcoming from the heavy ships which were absorbed with deliberations on the revolution.¹⁸² In any event, Harder did not find the enemy. On 10 November Hipper promulgated an order from the Naval High Command reminding the officers to stand by their posts.¹⁸³ But it was all too late. Hipper wrote on 11 November 1918:¹⁸⁴

The armistice goes into effect at noon. All acts of war are suspended. The terms are simply crushing...For the navy the conditions are especially harsh. Surrender of 160 U-boats, interning in a neutral harbour of 10 battleships, 6 battle cruisers, 6 light cruisers, 50 of the most modern torpedoboats. It falls to me to carry out this wretched business...

The terms of the armistice required the Germans to off-load the ammunition from all of their ships to be interned or surrendered. Hipper proceeded with this disarming of the fleet noting the work progressed with an almost insane efficiency, probably brought on by fear of the English. On 13 November Beatty and Hipper

¹⁸² Ibid, loc. cit.

¹⁸³ Nachlass Hipper, 9/17, 10 Nov 1918. Cf. Deist, op. cit. pp. 1400-1401 n.l. and Harder's war diary, op.cit., 10.IX.18.

¹⁸⁴ Nachlass Hipper, 9/17, 11 Nov 1918. See also Gladisch, op. cit., p. 347.

exchanged signals and Hipper was required to have an 'admiral with full negotiating powers in the Firth of Forth to discuss armistice arrangements by the 18th of November.'¹⁸⁵ The Soldiers Council insisted on sending three representatives with the admiral and Hipper agreed although he told them the English would ignore them.¹⁸⁶ This in fact is what happened.

On 18 November it was decided Admiral von Reuter would take the fleet into internment. Hipper said he did not feel up to the job though Naval State Secretary, Ritter von Mann, wanted him to do it.¹⁸⁷ At 1330 on the 19th of November 1918, the High Seas Fleet assembled for the last time in Schilling Roads with Admiral von Reuter in command. The Soldiers and Workers Councils of Berlin, Cuxhaven and Wilhelmshaven were there to see them off. Hipper regretted he could not do violence to them on the spot.¹⁸⁸

185

Ibid, 9/18, 13 Nov 1918, entry for 1200 hours. See also K.T.B. des K.d.H., op. cit., entry for 1200 hours, 13 Nov 1918.

186

Marder, op. cit., vol. v, p. 189.

187

Nachlass Hipper, 9/20, 17 Nov 1918.

188

Ibid, 9/21, 18 Nov 1918.

As the ships sailed from Schilling Roads to the
Firth of Forth, Hipper wrote:¹⁸⁹

My heart is breaking. With this my time
as fleet commander has come to an inglorious
end. The remaining questions of demobilization,
disarmament, and the negotiations with the
soldiers councils can be handled by my chief of
staff; I have nothing more to do. I shall
remain pro forma in command for a short time,
otherwise I am dead tired.

In examining the chronology of events to ascertain
if any of Hipper's activities helped turn rebellion into
revolution, it would seem only one act--his decision to
allow the rebellious Third Battle Squadron into Kiel--
may fall into this category. Ritter assigns Scheer,¹⁹⁰
Levetzow and Trotha heavy blame for the collapse of 1918.
Deist says the naval mutiny and collapse was a contributing,¹⁹¹
not a causal factor, in the German revolution. Czisnik's
¹⁹²view of the navy's role in the revolution is similar to
Deist's in that he views the naval events as part of a
¹⁹³developing national revolution. Ryder regards the naval
mutiny as 'the first act of the German revolution;..just as
the industrial strikes with their workers' councils and
political demands anticipated the events of 9 November 1918.'

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 9/22, 19 Nov 1918. See also Herwig, op.cit.,266.

¹⁹⁰ Ritter, op. cit., vol. iv, p. 378.

¹⁹¹ Deist, 'Die Unruhen in der Marine 1917/18,'op.cit.,p. 343.

¹⁹² Czisnik, op. cit., pp. 661-662.

¹⁹³ Ryder, op. cit., p. 102.

Hipper himself played no part in the post-war revolts and civil war. On 2 December 1918 he submitted his request to be placed on the inactive list; on 13 December he was retired with full war pension. Actually his record shows he was relieved of fleet command on 30 November but the administration of those days was doubtless somewhat confused.¹⁹⁴ Hipper began early to accommodate himself to the realities of the revolution even while he was still on active duty: his appeal to the crews on 30 October, his recognition that a 'revolution' was underway on 2 November, his attempts to guide the revolution on 4 and 6 November through the secret order to the officers, and his dealings with the Soldiers Council on the Baden. In the turmoil following the armistice and the first stage of the revolution, Hipper spent much of his time moving from place to place in northern Germany under an assumed name, lest radical revolutionaries find him.¹⁹⁵ He nevertheless maintained his interest in the navy and expressed his approval of the scuttling of the fleet at Scapa Flow in a letter to Trotha, then the interim commander of the navy.¹⁹⁶

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Nachlass Hipper, 9/23, 2 Dec 1918 and Personal Akten Hipper, entry for 30 Nov and 13 Dec 1918.

195 NS/SA, Nachlass Trotha, Hipper to Trotha, 2 Feb 1919, and 19 July 1919.

196 Ibid, Hipper to Trotha, 25 Dec 1919.

In his later years, Hipper also managed to attend some Skagerrak Day gatherings. It is known he was in ill health and financial straits after the war¹⁹⁷ which helps to explain Hipper's lack of post-war social or political prominence. His personal correspondence and private wartime papers were destroyed in 1944 in an air raid on Munich.

It cannot be concluded that Hipper was a counter-revolutionary; rather, his professional actions represented a continuing effort through the final hour before the armistice to preserve the naval service.

In Hipper's view the armistice disgraced the moderate socialist government not only because of the severe naval terms but more importantly because of the 5,000 locomotives and 100,000 goods wagons Germany had to surrender. These should have been used, he thought, to distribute food to an already starving nation; and in this he was representative of many of the German people. Unfortunately, Hipper's personal journal covering the years after the war until his death in 1932 is closed to researchers. No doubt it would reveal the evolution of his wartime thinking and perhaps provide much greater insight concerning Hipper, the man. But this study does

¹⁹⁷ Nachlass Levetzow, op.cit., Reel 45, Frame 00735, Raeder to Levetzow, 2 Aug 1922; also Reel 48, Frames 00313-4, 5 Jan 1929. The first reference concern's Raeder's request to Hipper for his admiral's gold stripes; Hipper said Raeder was too late--he had already sold them for the gold. Raeder asked Levetzow for his gold stripes.

not pretend to be a political biography; it is a war study of a World War I naval commander who lost.

Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper published no memoirs, no apologia. After the German revolution he eventually settled in a house in Hamburg where he died. He is buried in his native Bavarian town of Weilheim in a grave that is hard for a stranger to find.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGY OF NAVAL SERVICE

ADMIRAL FRANZ RITTER VON HIPPER
 (15 September 1863-25 May 1932)

This table is extracted from the Personal Information Sheet of Hipper's Service Jacket, BA/MA MGFA/DZ IM 46/13, located in the Federal German Military Archives, Freiburg.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments and Promotions</u>
12 Apr 1881	Entered the Navy.
12 Apr 1881 - 21 Sept 1881	S.M.S. <u>Niobe</u> , Cadet, North Sea and Baltic.
22 Sept 1881-- 31 Mar 1882	Naval School Cadet.
1 Apr 1881 - 12 May 1882	S.M.S. <u>Mars</u> , Gunnery Training, Wilhelmshaven.
13 May 1882 - 17 Sept 1882	S.M.S. <u>Friedrich Karl</u> , Drill Squadron, Baltic and North Sea.
16 May 1882	Promoted to Seacadet.
18 Sept 1882 - 6 Oct 1882	I. Seamans Division, Kiel. (leave)
7 Oct 1882 - 10 Oct 1884	S.M.S. <u>Leipzig</u> , World Cruise.
11 Oct 1884 - 2 Nov 1884	First Line Officer Examinations. (leave)
3 Nov 1884 - 24 Apr 1885	Naval Officer School, Kiel.
21 Nov 1884	Promoted to Sub-Lieutenant.
24 Apr 1885 - 11 Oct 1885	Division Officer I. Naval Battalion. (recruit training)
12 Oct 1885 - 16 Dec 1885	Naval Executive Officer Course.
17 Dec 1885 - 3 Jan 1886	I. Naval Division. (leave)
4 Jan 1886 - 3 Mar 1887	II. Seamans Artillery Division. (coastal defence artillery)

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments and Promotions</u>
4 Mar 1887 - 17 Sept 1887	S.M.S. <u>Friedrich Karl</u> , Watch Officer, Drill Squadron, Baltic and North Sea.
23 Sept 1887 - 19 Oct 1887	S.M.S. <u>Prinz Adalbert</u> , Watch Officer, Drill Squadron, Baltic and North Sea.
20 Oct 1887 - 20 Sept 1888	S.M.S. <u>Stein</u> , Watch Officer, Mediterranean and Atlantic, Manoeuvre Squadron.
23 July 1888	Promoted to Lieutenant.
21 Sept 1888 - 27 Apr 1889	S.M.S. <u>Stosch</u> , Watch Officer, Mediterranean Squadron.
1 May 1889 - 24 Dec 1889	S.M.S. <u>Wacht</u> , Watch Officer, Manoeuvre Squadron, Baltic, North Sea and Mediterranean.
25 Dec 1889 - 28 Apr 1890	S.M.S. <u>Friedrich der Grosse</u> , Watch Officer, Mediterranean Squadron.
29 Apr 1890 - 3 Oct 1890	S.M.S. <u>Siegfried</u> , Watch Officer, Commissioning and Trials, Baltic.
4 Oct 1890 - 10 Oct 1890	S.M.S. <u>Mücke</u> , Watch Officer, Cadre Crew, Baltic.
11 Oct 1890 - 18 Jan 1891	S.M.S. <u>Blücher</u> , Officers Torpedo Course, Kiel.
19 Jan 1891 - 3 Aug 1891	S.M.S. <u>Mücke</u> , Watch Officer, Cadre Crew, Baltic.
4 Aug 1891 - 14 Sept 1891	S.M.S. <u>Viper</u> , Watch Officer, Armoured Squadron, North Sea Manoeuvres.
15 Sept 1891 - 24 Sept 1891	S.M.S. <u>Mücke</u> , Watch Officer, Cadre Crew, Baltic.
11 Oct 1891 - 31 Mar 1892	S.M.S. <u>Friedrich der Grosse</u> , Torpedo Officer, Drill Squadron, Home Waters.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments and Promotions</u>
1 Apr 1892 - 8 Oct 1892	S.M.S. <u>Beowulf</u> , Torpedo Officer, Trials and Commissioning Crew.
9 Oct 1892 - 2 Jan 1893	II. Torpedo Unit, Company Commander.
3 Jan 1893 - 18 Feb 1893	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S2</u> , Officer Under Instruction.
19 Feb 1893 - 14 Mar 1893	II. Torpedo Unit, Company Commander.
15 Mar 1893 - 25 Mar 1893	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S21</u> , Commanding Officer.
26 Mar 1893 - 5 Apr 1893	II. Torpedo Unit, Company Commander.
27 Mar 1893 - 4 Apr 1893	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S16</u> , Commanding Officer.
25 Apr 1893 - 30 Sept 1893	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S78</u> , Commanding Officer.
1 Oct 1893 - 25 Nov 1893	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat H1</u> , Commanding Officer.
26 Nov 1893 - 8 Jan 1894	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S4</u> , Commanding Officer.
9 Jan 1894 - 6 Feb 1894	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S73</u> , Commanding Officer.
7 Feb 1894 - 2 July 1894	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S4</u> , Commanding Officer.
3 July 1894 - 28 Sept 1894	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat S54/56</u> , Commanding Officer.
29 Sept 1894 - 12 Oct 1894	Leave.
13 Oct 1894 - 25 Sept 1895	S.M.S. <u>Wörth</u> , Watch Officer, Manoeuvre Squadron, Home Waters.
14 Jan 1895	Promoted to Senior Lieutenant.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments and Promotions</u>
26 Sept 1895 - 17 Jan 1896	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat D8</u> , Commanding Officer and Commodore, II. Reserve Torpedoboat Division.
18 Jan 1896 - 15 Apr 1896	<u>S.M.Torpedoboat D9</u> , Commanding Officer and Commodore, II. Torpedo Division.
16 Apr 1896 - 12 Oct 1896	Commodore, A Torpedo Division, with pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat D9</u> .
13 Oct 1896 - 7 June 1897	Commodore, II. Torpedo Division, with pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat D8</u> .
8 June 1897 - 24 June 1897	<u>S.M.S. Grille</u> , Admiralty Staff Officer Cruise.
25 June 1897 - 30 Sept 1897	II. Reserve Torpedoboat Flotilla, Commanding Officer, with pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat D8</u> .
1 Oct 1897 - 14 Dec 1897	" " " " , pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat D2</u> .
15 Dec 1897 - 30 Mar 1898	" " " " , pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat D5</u> .
1 Apr 1898 - 30 Sept 1898	" " " " , pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat D9</u> .
1 Oct 1898 - 15 Sept 1899	<u>S.M.S. Kurfürst Friedrich Wilhelm</u> , Navigation Officer, I. Battle Squadron.
16 Sept 1899 - 30 Sept 1902	<u>S.M.Y. Hohenzollern</u> , Navigation Officer, Imperial Yacht.
16 June 1901	Promoted to Lieut. Commander.
1 Oct 1902 - 30 Sept 1905	II. Torpedo Unit, Commanding Officer.

APPENDIX I

The following assignments were performed while assigned to the II. Torpedo Unit as Commanding Officer:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments and Promotions</u>
6 Apr 1903 - 15 Apr 1903	S.M.S. <u>Niobe</u> , Commanding Officer.
16 Apr 1903 - 30 June 1903	S.M.S. Niobe, Commanding Officer, and Flotilla Chief of Flotillas Afloat.
1 July 1903 - 30 Sept 1903	II. Torpedo Flotilla, Flotilla Chief, with pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat G112.</u>
7 Aug 1904 - 12 Aug 1904	S.M.S. <u>Comet</u> , Sailing Yacht, 'Kiel Week,' Crew Member.
13 Aug 1904 - 30 Sept 1904	II. Torpedo Flotilla, Flotilla Chief, with pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat S102.</u>
29 Sept 1904 - 12 Oct 1904	Leave.
13 Oct 1904 - 2 May 1905	II. Torpedo Flotilla, Flotilla Chief, with pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat S102.</u>
5 Apr 1905	Promoted to Commander.
2 May 1905 - 10 June 1905	II. Torpedo Flotilla, Flotilla Chief, with pennant in <u>S.M.Torpedoboat D9.</u>
16 Aug 1905 - 15 Sept 1905	" " " "
1 Oct 1905 - 19 Apr 1906	Assigned to the staff of the Chief, North Sea Naval Station.

The following assignments were performed as temporary additional duty in the above assignment:

15 Jan 1906 - 26 Jan 1906	S.M.S. <u>Prinz Adalbert</u> , Senior Officers Cruiser Gunnery Course.
9 Apr 1906 - 14 Apr 1906	S.M.S. <u>Schwaben</u> , Senior Officers Battleship Gunnery Course.

APPENDIX I

The following were permanent assignments:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments and Promotions</u>
20 Apr 1906 - 22 Aug 1906	S.M.S. <u>Leipzig</u> , Commanding Officer, Trials and Commissioning Crew.
23 Aug 1906 - 29 Sept 1906	Leave.
30 Sept 1906 - 5 Mar 1908	S.M.S. <u>Friedrich Karl</u> , Commanding Officer, Home Fleet, Scouting Forces
6 Apr 1907	Promoted to Captain.
6 Mar 1908 - 30 Sept 1908	S.M.S. <u>Gneisenau</u> , Commanding Officer, Trials and Commissioning Crew.
1 Oct 1908 - 30 Sept 1911	I. Torpedo Division, Kiel, Commandant.
1 Oct 1911 - 26 Jan 1912	S.M.S. <u>Yorck</u> , Commanding Officer, and Chief of Staff to Deputy Flag Officer, Scouting Forces.
27 Jan 1912	Promoted to Rear Admiral.
27 Jan 1912 - 30 Sept 1913	Scouting Forces, Deputy Flag Officer, flag in S.M.S. <u>Cöln</u> , with collateral duty as Flag Officer, High Seas Fleet Torpedoboats.
1 Oct 1913 - 11 Aug 1918	Scouting Forces, Flag Officer, Flag in S.M.S. <u>Seydlitz</u> .
17 June 1915	Promoted to Vice Admiral.
11 Aug 1918	Promoted to Admiral.
11 Aug 1918 - 30 Nov 1918	High Seas Fleet, Commander-in-Chief.
13 Dec 1918	Retired at full war pension.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A General Note on Sources

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Archival Sources

1. German Ministry of Marine Manuscripts
 - a. Official Papers
 - b. Private Papers
2. British Admiralty Manuscripts
 - a. Public Record Office
 - b. Ministry of Defence Naval Historical Branch
 - c. Ministry of Defence Naval Library
 - d. National Maritime Museum
3. United States Navy Manuscripts

B. Writer's Correspondence

C. Published Documents

D. Memoirs, Diaries and Published Papers

II. SECONDARY WORKS

A. General Works and Monographs

B. Articles

C. Periodicals

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A General Note on Sources

The study of Hipper as a naval commander required the broadest possible search of the German naval archives. The British and American archives were searched to provide additional perspective and balance in examining Hipper's naval environment. The personal papers of Hipper and his naval colleagues were also consulted. Documents listed without comment were searched to provide broader understanding of Hipper's parameters in his naval service and to reconstruct lost records, though Hipper is not mentioned by name in these files.

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Archival Sources

1. German Ministry of Marine Manuscripts

The original documents are now largely at the Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, 7800 Freiburg im Breisgau, West Germany. The Nachlässe or private papers (literally "literary remains") of Hipper and many of his contemporaries are also found there. A notable exception is the Nachlass des Admirals Adolph von Trotha, Hipper's last chief of staff; this collection is located in the Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv, 4967 Bückeburg, West Germany.

The National Maritime Museum at Greenwich holds the only surviving official plans of ships of the Imperial German Navy.

The U. S. National Archives in Washington, D.C. holds microfilm copies of most of the official operational papers and many of the logistical records of the Imperial Navy. There are 1,659 reels in this collection but no private papers of admirals are included.¹

The principal problems encountered in research on Admiral Hipper occur as the result of war-time destruction of parts of both his official and private papers. In the case of official papers, the Akten des B.d.A. Aug 1914-Mai 1916 (Papers of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces) and the Geheimarchiv (Secret Files), both were lost when S.M.S. Lützow was sunk at Jutland. The destruction of both collections is cited in a memorandum from Admiral Scheer, C-in-C of the High Seas Fleet, to Admiral Capelle, State Secretary for Navy, dated 27 July 1918. A letter from his surviving relative, Frau Gabriele Streitl, of Munich, dated 28 June 1972, confirmed the destruction of all of Hipper's personal war-time papers in a fire following an air raid on Munich in 1944 with the exception of his personal diary which survives as the Nachlass Hipper.

1
Robert Wolfe (ed.), Captured German and Related Records A National Archives Conference, (Athens, Ohio, 1974), pp. 157-172.

Even with this, there is a family restriction on access to the final chapter which covers the post-World War I era. The restriction extends to 1992.

Additional considerations in researching Hipper include the dispersal of the papers of the High Seas Fleet among the Imperial Cabinet, the Imperial Naval Office, and the Admiralty Staff--each kept files on the Fleet's activities and there is considerable correspondence between the Fleet and the three authorities. Further, the Admiralty Staff was the ultimate repository for all the Fleet's war diaries and consequently much about Hipper is to be found here. Also, the German Naval Archive itself assembled several dozen packets on each action in World War I to write the official history of the war at sea. However, the removal of these documents resulted in several blanks in the chronological collections of the High Seas Fleet and other forces afloat. Nonetheless, there is much documentation in these packets covering actions in which Hipper participated.

The German Ministry of Marine MSS has had no less than five systems of file numbers. The first was the German registry (KR) numbers: four digits prefaced by an F (Fach or Shelf) number, the system still in use in Freiburg. The second and third systems reflect the capture of the German naval records virtually intact in April 1945 at Tambach Castle near Coburg. Transported to

London, the British and American naval intelligence catalogers assigned their own numbers to the collection. This system retained the original German archival arrangement and the organizational hierarchy of the German naval high command reflected therein. The PG number may contain anywhere from 10 to approximately 300 sides of manuscript with the average PG number containing about 250 sides.

The Americans, however, were less concerned with complete archival exploitation and preferred to extract and film select collections consisting primarily of political, operational and intelligence matters. They applied a third index system to items dated between 1850 and 1922, assigning microfilm roll numbers with a TA (Tambach Castle) preface. This TA system is of little use as a finding aid in exploiting the Washington collection, perhaps because the U. S. National Archives in 1970 superimposed what amounts to a fourth index system. In Washington, this collection is known as the T-1022 series and is arranged in microfilm reels numbered T-1022, Reels 1-1659. The Admiralty PG system is used in Washington and in Freiburg and can be used as a cross reference between the American collection and the German documents. The Bundesarchiv in Freiburg is in the process of adding yet another system of indexing their collections.

In this dissertation the F (KR) number will be given first wherever possible, followed by the PG number, and if the file was consulted in Washington, a T-1022 reel number will also be given.

All of the German Ministry of Marine MSS are listed under their archival index grouping which preceded each collection of files in the archive index books. These numbers (F, PG, and T) will be followed in this bibliography by the title of the file in German, a translation and a statement on the applicability of the file's contents to the course of research and Hipper.

a. Official Papers

Akten Admiralstab Abteilung 'B':

F 145/PG 75106/Reel 655, Kreuzerkrieg mit grosser Kreuzer Nov 1914, (Cruiser War with Battle Cruisers). This file contains a paper by Hipper on use of battle cruisers in overseas warfare and considerable correspondence with von Ingenohl, Fleet C-in-C, and Hipper's captains. This file shows Hipper as strategist and tactician.

F 150/PG 75842/Reel 823, Parlamentärischer Untersuchungsausschuss Okt 1919-Aug 1920, (Parliamentary Investigation of the German Collapse). Hipper, then retired, apparently played no part in the proceedings and gave no testimony.

F 151/PG 75842/Reel 837, Abwehr englischer Anschuldigungen (sic) gegen die deutsche Seekriegsführung, Jun-Sept 1920, (Legal Defence of the German High Command against English Charges). See Adm 1/8581/25 below for British view.

F 155/PG 75602, 75610-75616/Reel 706, Armistice West Okt 1917-Mai 1919, (Papers Concerning the Armistice on the Western Front). Erich Raeder, Hipper's chief of staff, figures in some of the documents of the German Naval Peace Commission in PG 75610-75616. Cf. Adm 116/1931-2002 below. While Hipper was not involved in the negotiations, both the German and NIACC files listed contain much about Hipper's materiel.

F 160/PG 75652-75654/Reels 951, 952, Laufende Marine-Politik, Nordsee Apr 1918-Mai 1919, (Current Naval Policy, North Sea, General). The file is useful in showing Hipper's lack of impact on grand strategy.

F 162/PG 75666/Reel 828, Akten betreffend laufende Marine-Politik Nordostatlantik Jan-Dec 1918, (Papers Concerning Current Naval Policy on the Northeast Atlantic). Although this file contains information of strategic and tactical interest to Hipper, he was apparently not on the distribution list.

F 163/PG 75675/Reel 708, Marineversuchskommission Mar-Okt 1918, (Naval Technical Commission).

F 166/PG 75704/Reel 872, Akten betr. Militärpolitische Angelegenheiten: Deutschland Dec 1917-Apr 1919, (Military-Political Situation, Germany). This file is useful in understanding Hipper's situation as Fleet Commander as well as the navy's role in German society of 1917-1918.

USNA/PG 76529-76543/Reels 982, 983, 984, 928, 929, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, Admiralstab der Marine Befehle an andere Behörden 1 Aug 1914-30 Sept 1918, (Admiralty Staff of the Navy, Correspondence with Other Commands). Much in this file concerns Hipper's ships and his efforts to improve, maintain or replace materiel. It contains information confirming the loss of Hipper's official papers and secret archives at Jutland and is very useful in studying Admiral Hipper as naval commander, especially in dealing with the shore establishment. This collection includes war organization of German naval forces, details the mobilization process, organization for issue of orders, instructions for search and seizure, requests for replacements of ships, personnel and materiel. The file contains an overview of the demands made by the forces afloat on the shore establishment and is a record of matters considered sufficiently important to merit the attention of the highest naval authorities. The file is approximately 4,200 sides.

Akten Admiralstab Abteilung 'A':

F 368-376/PG 76545-76572/Reels 1632-1653, Dislocation der Seestreitkräfte Aug 1914-Nov 1918, (Disposition of Naval Forces). This is a vast and interesting series of weekly lists of materiel readiness and locations of German naval forces including Hipper's. It includes Kohlen-und Öl-Bestände (Coal and Oil Stocks), a weekly status report of available fuel.

F 394/PG 76794-76796, Kohlen und Ölzufuhr (Coal and Oil Supply). This is a compilation and handy reference for the fuel status of Hipper's forces and the High Seas Fleet from Aug 1914-Nov 1918.

F 420/PG 76901/Reels 994, 995, Dienstanweisung für Vorpostendienst Aug 1915-Sept 1918, (Instructions for Watch Patrol Duty). Hipper was responsible for defence of German North Sea home waters and this is a record of the day-to-day orders providing for that defence.

F 420/PG 76902-76906/Reel 995, Seekriegsführung. Der Nordseekriegsschauplatz, (Naval Warfare. North Sea Theatre). In PG 76905 there is a discussion of the possibility of continuing the war at sea after cessation of land hostilities. Some of the conclusions of this 4 June 1918 conference ashore are similar to those reached at a fleet conference attended by Hipper on 7 October 1918 and recorded in his Nachlass. In PG 76906, dating from 3 July 1918 to 1 Apr 1919, there are indications several members of the naval high command did not give up the idea of further warfare even after internment of the fleet at Scapa Flow, but Hipper was not among them.

F 425/PG 76925-76926/Reel 942, Minenkriegführung 1914-1918, (Mine Warfare Leadership). This file is of particular importance because Hipper was responsible for the defence of the German Bight which involved considerable minelaying and minesweeping. It indicates Hipper was informed of Germany's overall effort in mine warfare.

F 426/PG 76945-76958, Englische Häfen 1914-1918, (British Harbours). This Admiralty Staff file helps replace some of Hipper's secret archives lost at Jutland. It tells what the Germans knew about English coastal targets; Hipper was on the distribution list.

F 431/PG 67974-67975/Reel 1060, Schriftwechsel über O-Directiven, Oct 1914-July 1918, (Correspondence on Operational Directives). This Admiralty Staff (Operations) file contains drafts and copies of several papers by senior naval officers on the direction the war should take and a paper by Admiral von Ingenohl dated January 1915 outlining a strategy which seems to have resulted in the Battle of Dogger Bank several weeks later. Hipper refers in his Nachlass on 10 January to being asked his opinion on this strategy by Ingenohl.

F 454/PG 77063-77064/Reels 1170, 1171. Ausgegangene Nachrichten über englische und französische Streitkräfte 1.8.-29.12.1914, (Intelligence Disseminated on English and French Warships). This file contains all the intelligence which Hipper could have received from the Admiralty Staff in the first half year of the war. It is particularly important because of the destruction of the B.d.A.'s own intelligence file for this period. Hipper is on the distribution list.

F 491/PG 77211-77228/Reels 1101, 1102, 1103, 1049, 1050, 1195, 1196, Nachrichten über die feindliche Flotte und Küstenbefestigungen 14 Aug 1916-16 Mar 1917, (Intelligence on the Enemy Fleet and Coastal Defences).

Akten Seekriegsleitung

These papers are the records of the Naval War Command set up by Admiral Reinhard Scheer in August 1918 to control all aspects of the war at sea. Hipper replaced Scheer at this time as Commander-in-Chief, High Seas Fleet.

F 561/PG 69287/Reel 1201, Akten AI Organisation Aug-Nov 1918, (Papers Concerning Organization of the Naval War Command).

This file contains Scheer's proposals which resulted in establishment of the command. To some extent, these differ from published accounts and also indicate Hipper inherited a High Seas Fleet command whose authority was diminished in favor of the Naval High Command.

F 562/PG 69295-69296/Reel 1184, Akten OPII AIX Meldungen an S.M. 18 Aug 1918-4 Nov 1918, (Reports to His Majesty, the Kaiser, from the Naval War Command). This file shows the Kaiser was more closely involved with the navy at the end of the war than several accounts admit. He does not appear to have been 'retired;' Scheer consulted him several times after establishment of the Naval War Command and generally followed his advice. This file also provides evidence Hipper's ability to direct naval strategy and events was severely limited.

F 566/PG 69329/Reel 1185, AII Kriegführung auf dem Nord.

Kriegsschauplatz 21 Aug 1918-7 Apr 1919, (Conduct of the War in the Northern Theatre). This is the continuation of Admiralty File F 420 and contains intelligence information which could have been given to Hipper.

Admiralstab der Marine Abteilung 'N':

This collection was consulted in an attempt to complete the survey of incoming intelligence to which Hipper would have had access.

F 602-603/PG 69389/Reels 1211, 1212,

PG 69390-69392/Reels 1212, 1213,

PG 69293/Reel 1210,

PG 69294-69295/Reels 1210, 1211, 23 July 1914-

31 Dec 1918, Westlicher Kriegsschauplatz, Kriegsperiode

1914-1918, (Intelligence Received, Western War Theatre,

War Period 1914-1918). This collection shows Hipper's needs

were not particularly well-served by the intelligence col-

lection system since it was biased in favour of political/

strategical informatin. Nonetheless, it is the most complete

collection of general naval intelligence found in one file.

The file shows the Germans were limited, especially in the

latter half of the war, to central European sources for

their intelligence and large portions of it came from their

embassies in neutral Amsterdam and Stockholm.

Akten der Admiralstab

Papers listed under this heading are from the general col-

lection which fell under the purview of the Chief of the

Admiralty Staff. Abteilung 'A' (European Department),

Abteilung 'B' (Extra-European Department), and Abteilung 'N'

(Intelligence Department), referred to above, each had their

own archive, however.

F 637/PG 65132-65133/Reel 1395, Geheime Militärpolitische Berichte, Streitigkeiten, Meinungsdiverfenzen Jan 1903-Apr 1916, (Secret Military/Political Reports, Disputes, and Differences of Opinion).

F 722/PG 65676, Akten S.M.S. Friedrich Karl July 1902-Aug 1914, (Papers of the Armoured Cruiser S.M.S. Friedrich Karl). These are the papers of Hipper's first major ship command and those for 1907, the year he commanded this ship, reflect a 'tight ship' which won the Kaiser's gunnery prize.

Reichsmarineamt

F 728/PG 65702-65705/Reels 1168, 1169, Reichsmarineamt Allgemeines Marinedepartement Akten betreffend die Hochseeflotte Herbstmanöver 1908-1915, (Imperial Naval Office, General Naval Department, Papers Concerning the High Seas Fleet Autumn Manoeuvres). Hipper begins to figure in the collection from 1912 onward. This correspondence file includes useful information for tracing the development of communications, mine warfare, U-boats, and problems encountered by an ever-expanding German fleet. It is a detailed overview of the tactical milieu in which Hipper developed as a naval commander prior to World War I.

F 728/PG 65708, Akten II. Geschwader und Heimische Kreuzer-division Jan 1903-Aug 1917, (Papers of the Second Battle Squadron and the Home Cruiser Division). This records the

antecedents of the First Scouting Group and the beginnings of the German home cruiser forces. Students of the High Seas Fleet should not fail to investigate it.

F 728/PG 65709-65728/Reels 1143, 1142, 1401, 1402, 1312, 1313, 1314, 1138, 1139, 1143, 1247, 1248, Akten Schlachtflotte (Hochseeflotte) Jun 1903-Nov 1918, (Papers of the Active Battle Fleet later High Seas Fleet). This collection contains a major position paper by Hipper on the recruiting system of the German fleet in PG 65715. This is also found in F 33031f/PG 66709. There is also a vast collection of manoeuvre reports in which Hipper figures after 1912.

USNA/ PG 66085/Reel 1500, Reichsmarineamt Zentral-Abteilung, Akten Sitzungs-Protokolle vom Juli 1900 bis Mai 1902, (Imperial Naval Office Central Division, Papers Concerning Plenary Conferences from July 1900 to May 1902). These files record the conferences which decided the shape and characteristics of ships in the High Seas Fleet.

USNA/PG 66086/Reel 1500, Sitzungs-Protokolle Juni 1902-Dec 1904 Bd. 3, (Records of Plenary Conferences, vol. 3). This is a continuation of the collection begun in PG 66085 above. The German comment on the materiel lessons to be learned from the Russo-Japanese War is contained in Protokoll 15 Nov 1904; for the British view see PRO Adm 116/866B listed below. The German comment has considerable bearing on later German materiel development.

USNA/PG 66087/Reel 1501, Sitzungs-Protokolle Jan 1905-

Apr 1909 Bd. 4, (Records of Plenary Conferences, vol. 4).

These records are critical in understanding the reasoning behind the construction of S.M.S. Blücher, the controversial transition ship between the armoured cruiser and the battle cruiser in the German navy. The records also include the rationale behind the re-introduction of ship-carried anti-torpedo nets. Especially important are the conferences of 19 Sept and 7 and 18 Nov 1906 which decided the characteristics of S.M.S. von der Tann, Hipper's first battle cruiser. As a source for the study of the German battle cruiser, especially its design and evolution, these records are invaluable.

USNA/PG 66088/Reel 1501, Sitzungs-Protokolle Marz 1909-

Nov 1916 Bd. 5, (Records of Plenary Conferences, vol. 5).

This file contains the conference which decided the shape of Derfflinger, Lützow and Hindenburg, the finest all-around warships produced by any power in World War I and the most powerful Hipper had under him in combat. No study of the German battle cruiser's development can be appreciated without understanding the thinking behind these ships and investigating this file.

Reichsmarineamt, Konstruktionsabteilung:

F 50/66, 10-15, Deutsche Kriegsflotte Band I Linienschiffe, 1910-1915, (German War Fleet Part I, Ships of the Line).

This series is the most compact summary of data extant on High Seas Fleet battleships from S.M.S. Schlesien to S.M.S. Grosser Kurfürst. The collection consists of a series of official pamphlets intended for service as ships characteristics manuals.

F 50/66, 16, 17, 18, Deutsche Kriegsflotte Band III Grosse Kreuzer, 1908-1914, (German War Fleet Part III), Battle and Armoured Cruisers). This file contains a technical description of all German armoured and battle cruisers and is valuable for a comprehensive analysis of Hipper's ships. It reveals much hitherto unpublished information about the Kaiser's navy.

Akten Admiralstab der Marine:

USNA/PG 62369-62382, 62430-62436/Reels 141, 142, 207-211,

Kriegstagebuch des Kommandos der Hochseestreitkräfte:

Admirals von Ingenohl, von Pohl, Scheer, von Hipper, 30 Jul 1914-8 Jan 1919, (War Diary of the High Seas Fleet Command). This chronicle, authored by succeeding Fleet Commanders, is invaluable for analyzing Hipper's role in the war at sea. His participation in the naval war effort is reflected by the amount of excerpts from his own reports which are included in the diary by his superiors. This diary is also a useful compendium of tactical and strategic opinion, although the last portion survives only in

the pencilled original. Dr. Gert Sandhofer, senior archivist, Federal German Military Archives, told the writer in Freiburg in 1972 that the typed originals were destroyed on Hitler's order lest the navy be embarrassed by revelations concerning the 1918 mutinies and revolution.

F 1884-1890/PG 63864-63910/Reels 1461, 1459, Akten des Befehlshabers der Aufklärungsschiffe, 1911-1918, (Papers of the Flag Officer Reconnaissance Forces). This file contains few papers dated prior to 31 May 1916 because the archive sank with Hipper's flagship at Jutland. This loss thus necessitated a wide search of other possible sources for pre-Jutland information.

F 3817-3820/PG 62446-62617/Reels 107, 176, Kriegstagebuch der B.d.A., 30 Jul 1914-8 Aug 1918, (War Diary of the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces). This is probably the single most important document available to a historian of Hipper as a commander. It contains a chronology of the wartime operations of his command and where merited, extensive reports on operations and actions, as well as Hipper's own comment.

F 3820/PG 62617/Reel 176, Kriegstagebuch Befehlshaber der Nordsee-Sicherung 12 Aug 1918-4 Nov 1918, (War Diary of the Flag Officer, North Sea Defences). This is the record of a post created at Hipper's instigation to relieve the Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, from responsibility for

defence of the German Bight.

F 3885/Reels 309, 310, Kriegstagebuch S.M.S. Derfflinger, 1914-1918, (War Diary, S.M.S. Derfflinger). This document is a complete war-time record of the operations of one of Hipper's capital ships. It is useful for corroboration of facts and opinions about Hipper's operations. This also applies to the war diaries of other capital ships under Hipper listed below, examined in the following order:

F 3893/PG 63208, Kriegstagebuch S.M.S. Hindenburg 1917-1918.

F 3899/PG 63257, Kriegstagebuch S.M.S. Lützow 1915-1916.

F 3902/PG 63373-63375/Reel 318, Kriegstagebuch S.M.S. Moltke 1914-1918.

F 3913/PG 63370-63372/Reel 387, Kriegstagebuch S.M.S. Seydlitz 1914-1918.

F 3916/PG 63403-63406/Reel 372, Kriegstagebuch S.M.S. von der Tann 1914-1918.

USNA/PG 68117-68121/Reels 1658, 1659, Admiralstab der Marine, Kriegsnachrichten 1 Jun 1917-5 Nov 1918, (Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy, War Intelligence). This file contains a monthly assessment of the war situation based on available intelligence about enemy intentions and movements and in-house information on German strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no mention of the 1917 summer mutinies or the 1918 mutiny and revolution in the German analysis. This file is the "official war news" which Hipper refers to often in his personal war diary.

USNA/PG 77732, 77732d, 77733, 77734/Reels 1659, 1129,
Hochseeflotte Kriegsergebnisse Jan 1915-May 1917, (High
Seas Fleet War Experiences). This important collection
contains several comprehensive reports from Hipper in-
cluding his opinion of materiel, gunnery, navigation,
machinery, torpedoes, safety measures, administration,
food and morale, tactics, strategy and war aims.

USNA/PG 77740-77743/Reels 1374, 1375, 1376, 1406, Hochsee-
flotte Akte betreffend Kriegs-Versuche (Kriegsarchiv der
Marine) 1914-1918, (High Seas Fleet Papers Concerning War
Experiments (Naval War Archive)). This file contains evi-
dence that Hipper was involved in several wartime develop-
ments of German naval technology, including anti-submarine
warfare nets, general defence against submarines, smoke-
screens (both fixed and shipboard) and minesweeping devices.

USNA/PG 76968-76973/Reels 943, 1044, Admiralstab der Marine,
Akten betreffend Befehle für Flotten-Unternehmungen vom
Apr 1916-Feb 1919, (Admiralty Staff of the Navy, Papers
Concerning Orders for Fleet Operations from April 1916-
February 1919). This file indicates Hipper's responsibility
for wartime operational planning under Admirals Ingenohl
and Pohl was assumed by Captains Trotha and Levetzow after
April of 1916. PG 77969 contains a scathing report by Scheer
on Hipper's conduct of the rescue of U-20 and U-30. His-
torians wishing to trace the operational planning of the
German naval high command will find this collection useful.

Akten Kaiserliches Marine-Kabinett:

F 3301/PG 66696-66699, Organisation der Obersten Marinebehörden Juni 1888-Sept 1918, (Organization of the Higher Naval Command). This file gives a good record of the decision-making process which resulted in the German Navy's command structure. It is an introduction to the problem of the command's lack of unity which plagued Hipper, the High Seas Fleet, and the German Navy in World War I.

F 3302/PG 66700/Reel 488, Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen den obersten Marinebehörden Nov 1892-März 1911, (Differences of Opinion Among the Higher Naval Commands).

F 3302 1d/PG 66701-66705/Reels 539, 540, Organisation des Admiralstabs der Marine März 1899-Nov 1918, (Organization of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy). Useful in analyzing Hipper's service assignments; also provides information on changes in Fleet C-in-C's authority under Hipper in 1918.

F 3302 1e/PG 66706/Reel 540, Organisation des Bildungswesens der Marine Sept 1884-Apr 1914, (Organization of the Naval Training Command). This file is useful in establishing Hipper's relative level of education in the navy.

F 3303 1f/PG 66707-66711/Reels 510, 511, Organisation der Seestreitkräfte Jun 1891-Aug 1918, (Organization of Naval Forces). This file contains the record of the development of the billet of Flag Officer, Reconnaissance Forces, as

well as lessons learned in war games, fleet exercise regulations and drill reports, information on the development of wireless communications in the German navy, a major fleet discussion of German naval manning difficulties, to which Hipper contributed a paper; PG 66710 contains a report from Hipper via the C-in-C High Seas Fleet to the Kaiser on the battle readiness of the Scouting Forces; another document contains a clear definition of the limited authority of the B.d.A. PG 66711 contains correspondence on authority, responsibility and assignments of Scouting Force admirals.

F 3304 1f1/PG 66712-66713/Reel 513, Flottengesetz Apr 1897-Jan 1913, (Fleet Laws). The first fleet law contains the earliest justification found in the records for scouting forces. This file contains the most basic documents concerning planning and some of the politics that went into drafting the fleet laws. A student wishing to ascertain the size, timing and duration of the Imperial Navy's construction program should examine these files.

F 3304/PG 66714/Reel 513, Organisation des Torpedowesens Juli 1890-Okt 1914, (Organization of the Torpedo Forces). This file is important to an understanding of the service branch in which Hipper spent the majority of his career. There is evidence here the torpedo branch had a lower political and strategic priority than generally believed.

F 3304 1h/PG 66715/Reel 513, Organisation der Schiffs-Artillerie, des Marinewesens und Marinedepots Okt 1899-Juni 1918, (Organization of the Naval Artillery Department, the Naval Establishment and the Naval Depots).. This file shows the work done building the naval establishment in these three areas and that Hipper was not involved in it.

FF3310 IVb/PG 66767-66768/Reel 631, Erfindungen, (Inventions) 1914-1918.

F 3317-3318/PG 66787-66791, Bestimmungen betr. Stellungbesetzungen Sept 1891-Nov 1918, (Stipulations Concerning the Filling of Service Assignments). PG 66786 contains copies of excerpts from the semi-annual fitness reports of all German navy flag officers from 1912-1915, including Hipper.

F 3330/PG 66849-66853, Stellenbesetzungen mit Seeoffizieren Nov 1912-Dec 1918, (Assignment of Naval Executive Officers). Good evidence is provided here of shortage of officers in the war years. This evidence is related to the German naval collapse of 1918.

F 3353/PG 66959-66961/Reel 516, Admiralstabsreisen Mai 1890-Apr 1911, (Admiralty Staff Journeys). This file contains records of inspectional and educational tours by Admiralty Staff officers in training; Hipper made such a journey June-July 1897.

F 3386/PG 67143-67415, Literarische Veröffentlichungen von Offizieren und Beamten Mai 1891-Juni 1916, (Publications by Officers and Officials). This source, coupled with

research of Marine Rundschau through 1932 (analagous to the Naval Review) confirms that Hipper wrote nothing for publication during his service years.

F 3391/PG 67211-67219, 67230, 67233, 67240-67243/Reels 492, 513, 514, 515, Übungsberichte Aug 1889-März 1915 (Drill Reports). These documents chart the performance of some of Hipper's succeeding commands, especially the torpedoboats. PG 67288 contains a report on the II Torpedo-Abteilung 1904-1905 from Hipper's superior at the time; PG 67230 contains a report on the I Torpedo-Abteilung under Hipper in 1909, which the Kaiser endorsed personally. PG 62735 contains reports on the Inspectorate of Naval Training Sept 1905-July 1913. PG 67236 contains annual reports on the entire naval training effort and useful in understanding Hipper's naval environment from 1913-1918. F 3391-3396/PG 67237-67246/Reels 494, 515, 516, Akten Hochseeflotte Übungsberichte Okt 1905-Dec 1914, (Papers of the High Seas Fleet Concerning Battle Drill Reports, incl. appendices). This is a vast and exhaustive series on virtually every peacetime drill conducted by the High Seas Fleet. In the 1912 manoeuvres Hipper submitted a report on the performance of light cruisers and destroyers in his capacity as Deputy Flag Officer, Scouting Forces. In 1913 the records of the May 'Kaiser Manoeuvres' show a major battle drill repeated at Hipper's suggestion, an unusual

occurrence. This file is of importance to scholars because it is a good record of the methodology of German naval tactical development; and it delineates to some extent the role of Hipper in the process.

F 3426/PG 67377, Schiffsunfälle in der Kaiserlichen Marine Jan 1914-März 1917, (Ships' Accidents in the Imperial Navy).

This file shows Hipper's capital ships were not involved in any major collisions in this period though there were several in other commands.

F 3428/PG 67385-67388/Reel 494, Schiffbau in der Kaiserlichen Marine Jan 1904-Sept 1918, (Shipbuilding in the Imperial Navy).

The first three PG numbers which contain the record of naval construction prior to 1915 are available only in Freiburg in the original. They compare German construction with that of other countries. PG 67388, Beiheft Schiffersatz Okt 1915-Sept 1918, (Special File Shipbuilding/Ship Design), is a very interesting record of problems faced by the Germans in providing for replacements of war losses, especially capital ships and battle cruisers. It includes accurate and detailed information on the British shipbuilding program of the era and the Kaiser's role in the decision-making process of naval shipbuilding. Hipper received copies of what the Imperial Cabinet knew about the British effort.

F 3439/PG 67447/Reel 636, Die Detachierte Division Okt 1913-Dez 1914, (Mittelmeer), (The Detached Division, Mediterranean).

This file contains evidence that Hipper was concerned about the effect of the deployment of one of Germany's few battle cruisers to a foreign station, primarily because this deployment depleted his small reserve of trained personnel.

F 3443 XXXI/PG 67475/Reels 501, 520, Flottenpolitik Aug 1911-Feb 1912, (German Fleet Policy).

F 3444 XXXId/PG 67476/Reel 634, Akten Kaiserlichen Marine Kabinet betr. Militärpolitische Fragen Apr 1918, (Papers of the Imperial Naval Cabinet Concerning Military-Political Questions). Evidence here indicates Hipper, as Fleet Commander, never reached the level of impact on national policy that Scheer did as Fleet Commander.

F 3456-3457/PG 67548-67552/Reels 602, 564, 565, Reise S.M. der Kaiser und König im Jahre 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, (Travels of His Majesty, Emperor and King).

F 3468/PG 67613, Auszüge aus Qualifikationsberichten über Flaggoffiziere, Dez 1915-Dez 1917, (Excerpts from Fitness Reports on Flag Officers). This file allows a comparison of Hipper with other flag officers in the German navy from an official viewpoint.

F 3490 I3/PG 67787-67790/Reels 565, 566, Vorträge und Audienzen bei Sr. Majestät, Apr 1899-März 1918, (Addresses and Audiences with His Majesty). This collection is useful in ascertaining Hipper's relationship with the Kaiser though he is not among those who sought an audience.

The following documents were among those assembled by the German Ministry of Defence, Naval High Command (Marineleitung) for the purpose of writing the official naval history after the end of World War I. They are particularly rich in Hipper-related material.

F 4059/PG 64734-64736/Reel 460, Kr. Op. Nordsee 8 Seegefecht bei Helgoland 28.8.1914, 3 Bd., (War Operation North Sea 8, Sea Battle off Heligoland 28 Aug 1914, 3 vols.). Hipper figures prominently in this substantive collection of after-action reports, survivors' reports and enemy reports on the first sea battle of World War I. He is also a subject of correspondence among von Ingenohl, von Müller, and von Tirpitz whose son was aboard the cruiser Mainz and was captured by the British.

F 4060/PG 64752/Reel 406, Kr. Op. Nordsee 23a Nicht ausgeführte Kriegsaufgabe der Flotte 1914, IBd. 30 Sept 1914, (War Operations North Sea 23a Fleet War Plan 1914 Not Carried Out). This file contains an interesting plan authored by Hipper for a raid on the northern British blockade line.

F 4060/PG 64753-64754/Reel 406, Kr. Op. Nordsee 24 Flottenunternehmung gegen die englische Küste, 2Bd. 2.11.1914-3.11.1914, (War Operation North Sea 24 Fleet Operation Against the English Coast). The German records of the planning and execution of the bombardment of Yarmouth on 2-3 Nov 1914 are contained in this file; also Hipper's evaluation.

F 4061/PG 64758-64761/Reels 442, 443, Kr. Op. Nordsee 27
Flottenunternehmung gegen die englische Küste, 15-16.12.1914,
(War Operation North Sea 27 Fleet Operation Against the English Coast). This file is critical to the understanding of Hipper's role as a combat commander and in evaluating his ability to benefit from tactical experience. This file also contains important evidence concerning the only contact between elements of the British and German main battle fleets before Jutland. There are copies of every war diary of every German ship involved and also copies of the English after-action reports as published.

F 4062/PG 64771-64775/Reels 345, 346, Kr. Op. Nordsee 35
Doggerbank-Schlacht am. 24.1.1915, (War Operation North Sea 35, Battle of the Dogger Bank on 24 Jan 1915). This extensive collection of documents contains the war diaries of every ship and plan involved including some later reports of S.M.S. Blücher survivors. The file includes some nine document submitted by Hipper and his staff to the Fleet Command, the report of the Fleet C-in-C to the Kaiser, an exchange of comments concerning possible relief of Hipper, complaints by German battle cruiser captains about the quality of their ships, lack of gun range and targeting ability of the British.

The following files concern several operations undertaken by the Fleet in which Hipper took a part but during which no notable contact with the enemy was made. They were researched to help trace Hipper's development of war-time tactical thought as well as his relations with his commanders. F 4063/PG 64780-64781/Reel 461, Kr. Op. Nordsee 40 Flotten-Operation gemäss Op. Befehl 26, 17-18.4.1915, (War Operation North Sea 40, According to Operations Order No. 26, 17-18 Apr 1915). Useful in evaluating Hipper's views on mine-laying; also contains an interesting paper by him on the war-time use of wireless telegraphy.

F 4063/ PG 64782/Reel 461, Kr. Op. Nordsee 41 Flotten-Operation gemäss Op. Befehl 27, 21-22.4.1915, (War Operation North Sea 41, Fleet Operation According to Operations Order No. 27, 21-22 Apr 1915). This file was helpful in structuring Hipper's relations with the High Command because it contains Hipper's official comment and the Fleet Commander's comments on a repetition of the Dogger Bank sortie.

F 4063/PG 64786/Reel 462, Kr. Op. Nordsee 45 Flotten-Operation gemäss Op. Befehl 28, 25-26.5.1915, (War Operation North Sea 45, Fleet Operation According to Operations Order No. 28, 25-26 May 1915). This file provides additional information on tactical lessons learned by Hipper.

F 4063/PG 64791/Reel 462, Kr. Op. Nordsee 50 Engl. Angriff auf die deutsche Bucht am 4.7.1915, (War Operation North Sea 50 English Attack on the German Bight on 4 July 1915). This file contains another of Hipper's analyses as well as comment by the Fleet C-in-C and other authorities on his thinking.

F 4064/PG 64801/Reel 408, Kr. Op. Nordsee 52 Vorstoss der Flotte zur Abwehr bei List gemeldeter feindliche Streitkräfte und Fleiger 25-26.3.1916, (War Operation North Sea 52 Sortie of the Fleet for the Defence of the Island of List against Enemy Ships and Aircraft Reported, 25-26 March 1916).

This file is useful in evaluating Hipper's ability to absorb tactical lessons despite physiological and psychological strain.

F 4061/PG 64808-64813/Reels 347, 348, 443, 444, 445, Kr. Op. Nordsee 61 Seeschlacht vor dem Skagerrak 31.5.16-1.6.16,

(War Operation North Sea 61 Battle at the Skagerrak 31 May-1 June 1916). This is the most important file for the understanding of Hipper as a naval commander in battle. It contains hundreds of reports from every commander, ship, or admiral who participated in the action. It also contains a copy of Admiral Scheer's report to the Kaiser which details Hipper's role. Hipper's own reports, both operational and technical, are most complete. British official accounts, published and unpublished, are included. Press clippings

which extend to the 10-year anniversary of Jutland in 1926, make no mention of individual German commanders.

F 4067/PG 64825-64826/Reels 462, 463, Kr. Op. Nordsee 70 Flottenoperation gemäsz Op. Befehl 8, 18.8.1916-19.8.1916, (War Operation North Sea 70 Fleet Operation According to Operations Order 8, 18-19 Aug 1916). This file contains useful comment by Hipper on a major German effort to repeat the strategy but using lessons learned in tactics at Jutland.

F 4069/PG 64839/Reels 411, 412, Kr. Op. Nordsee 82 Vorstoss zur Deckung und Hilfeleistung beim Festkommen U-20 und U-30, 4-5.11.16, (War Operation North Sea 82 Sortie for the Assistance and Salvage of Stranded U-20 and U-30, 4-5 Nov 1916). This file is particularly useful in analyzing the relationship between Hipper and Scheer, Fleet C-in-C. It contains documents indicating the Naval High Command was not pleased with Hipper's performance.

F 4070/PG 64846/Reel 446, Kr. Op. Nordsee 89 Gefecht der 5. Minensuchflotilla mit englishchen Streitkräfte 16.8.17, (War Operation North Sea 89, Battle of the Fifth Minesweeping Flotilla with English Warships 16 Aug 1917). This file includes analysis and comment on the operation by Hipper and Fleet C-in-C, Scheer.

F 4070/PG 64849-64850/Reels 445, 446, Kr. Op. Nordsee 92 Gefecht der II. A.G. mit schweren englischen Streitkräften, 17.11.1917, (War Operation North Sea 92 Battle of the Second Scouting Group with Heavy Enemy Warships 17 Nov 1917).

The records of this action provide a remarkable contrast with those of 28 Aug 1914, the last serious attack by the British on the German Bight. They are useful for an appreciation of Hipper's attitude to combat in the latter stages of war.

F 4078/PG 64923/Reels 351, 352, Flottenunruhen 1918-1918, (Fleet Disturbances 1917-1918). This file is useful in establishing Hipper's lack of a significant role in dealing with the 1917 mutinies in the fleet; it indicates Scheer and higher naval authorities regarded discipline as their responsibility. Admiral Scheer's extensive evaluation appears in this file.

F 4070/PG 64914-64919, 64922/Reels 349, 350, 351, 449, Revolution 1918 (1918 Revolution). This is the most complete collection in the German archives concerning the naval mutiny and revolution of 1918, and should be of great importance to any historian interested in this era. Assembled by the Ministry of Defence Naval High Command from 1919 through 1938, the collection contains several documents worthy of particular note: the report by Hipper's chief of staff, von Trotha, on the causes of the navy's collapse, a copy of which may be found in the Levetzoe Nachlass and a partial translation in Marder, vol. 5; a report from Beodecker whose First Battle Squadron sparked the revolt; a report from Kraft of the Third Battle Squadron which began the revolution in Kiel; a report of Commodore Heinrich on the

entire mutiny, revolt and revolution. As Flag Officer, Torpedoboats, Heinrich's report is excellent for detailing Hipper's role in the events of late 1918. The war diary of the Second Scouting Group, one of the few surviving war diaries of a naval command for the period of the mutiny and revolution, is useful as a chronicle of events.

MGFA/DZ IM 46/13, Personal Akten Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper 1863-1932, BA/MA, Freiburg, FRG.. This is the service record of Admiral Hipper and is very useful for a confidential view of him from his superiors.

b. Private Papers

N 158, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Nachlass von Müller, 1871-1926. This contains the diaries, notebooks and letters of Admiral Georg von Müller, Chief of the Naval Cabinet. Sections 4 and 5, dating from 1 Sept 1910 to 18 Nov 1918 were useful in the study of Hipper's relations with the naval high command.

N 162/1-10, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Nachlass Hipper, May 1914-March 1919. This is Hipper's personal war diary kept in typed manuscript form. The document is the official copy of the original which was lost when the office of Hipper's brother, a Munich attorney, was burned during an air raid in 1944. Parts 1-9 are open, covering the above period. Part 10 is closed, not to be opened until 1992. His biographer noted that Hipper 'expressly declared that these ...brief business-like notes...were not intended for publication so that only a few real intimates have ever seen

them.'² It is a frank chronicle of Hipper's life in four years of war. Indeed it does a great deal more than provide 'insight into the planning aspects of German naval policy.'³ Of all German naval commanders, Hipper spent the most time in actual combat and his personal observations are unique from/^aGerman admiral. These private papers, consisting entirely of a war journal, are an essential benchmark in understanding Hipper as a naval commander. N 170/1-2, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Nachlass Capelle (Eduard), 1914-1918. This collection of letters and correspondence of Admiral Eduard von Capelle sheds some light on the appointment of Admiral Hipper as Fleet C-in-C in August 1918.

N 171, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Nachlass Waldeyer-Hartz, 1918. These are the private papers of Hipper's biographer concerned primarily with Waldeyer-Hartz's tenure as commanding officer of the pre-dreadnought S.M.S. Schleisen in 1918. They do not contain any correspondence from Hipper.

N 173, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Nachlass Behncke, 1910-1926. This collection sheds some light on the strategical activists in the fleet and their general belief that relief of Hipper would be beneficial.

² Waldeyer-Hartz, op. cit., p. 230.

³ Herwig, op. cit., p. 276.

N 239, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Nachlass Levetzow, 1914-1938. Hipper is mentioned several times, usually in a derogatory manner, in correspondence between Levetzow and fellow battle cruiser captains; between Levetzow and Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff, chief of the Admiralty Staff, 1915-1918; between Levetzow and Erich Raeder, Hipper's chief of staff, 1913-1917; and between Levetzow and Admiral Adolph von Trotha, Hipper's last chief of staff, August-November 1918. The correspondence is useful in ascertaining attitudes of Hipper's subordinates. In later correspondence which goes to 1938 there are several letters concerning Hipper which Levetzow exchanged with Raeder. The documents on the navy's reorganization in the summer of 1918 are useful in delineating Hipper's role as are the documents on the revolution and mutinies.

N 253/213, 218, 227, 232-235, Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Nachlass Tirpitz. In hundreds of Tirpitz letters to various leading naval officers there is none to or from Hipper, indicating there was no personal Tirpitz-Hipper relationship, though other documents indicate there was an official one. The latter, when cited by Tirpitz, never mention Hipper by name, only by title.

Dep. 18 A 132, Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv, Bückeburg, Nachlass Admiral Adolph von Trotha. This collection contains five letters from Hipper to Trotha, apparently the largest collection of personal letters extant from Hipper. They

date from 1918 to 1930 and are rich in personal opinion and observation. The von Trotha Nachlass is open only upon approval of Admiral Clamor von Trotha, the Admiral's son.

There are no Nachlässe on deposit in the archives in Freiburg, London, or Washington for Admirals von Ingenohl, von Pohl, Scheer, or Raeder, though these four officers professionally important to Hipper did leave published memoirs which are cited elsewhere in this bibliography. Die Weizsäcker-Papiere 1900-1918 are at present a typed manuscript being edited for publication by Prof. L.E. Hill, University of British Columbia, Canada. Weizsäcker was a lieutenant commander in the High Seas Fleet, 1914-1918, flag lieutenant to Scheer, 1916, and later navigator of the battle cruiser von der Tann, 1918, while Hipper still commanded the First Scouting Group. Weizsäcker finished the war as liaison officer between the army and navy high commands in Grand Headquarters. His opinions on naval warfare, the changes in the high command in 1918, and the naval mutiny and revolution, were particularly useful.

2. British Admiralty MSS

To appreciate the naval environment in which Hipper operated and to check the accuracy and validity of his own observations as a commander it was imperative to consult the records of his enemies. Not all the documents which concerned Hipper, especially those dealing with his materiel, survived in Germany. The search of Admiralty MSS was concentrated on operations, intelligence and materiel. The following collections are listed in the order in which they appear in the archives.

a. The Public Record Office.

This main British archive is located in Chancery Lane, London, and contains most of the papers of the British Admiralty. Consulted were:

Admiralty 1 (selected registered files of the Admiralty Secretary's Department).

Adm 1/5691-8770 IND. This file contains the Admiralty Index for all information on Germany and was searched carefully for reference to Hipper; none was found.

Adm 1/8367/27, 'Capital Ships Anti-torpedoboat Armament,' 28 Jan 1914. Useful for an appreciation of contemporary materiel problems.

Adm 1/8404/450, 'Refusal of Arabs and Somalis on board H.M.S. Dartmouth at Simonstown to work, request for permission to use flogging,' 29 Nov 1914. Useful for comparative analysis of German practices, despite 1872 law against it.

Adm 1/8461/152, 'Complaint of Sir David Beatty re
Dispatches on Battle of Jutland, Dogger Bank, and Heligo-
land Bight,' 21 June 1916. Useful for an appreciation of
the problems of Hipper's opposition commander.

Adm 1/8471/241, 'Experiments, Trials, etc. on Long Distance
W/T on Submarines and Destroyers; Organization for W/T
stations fitted with Poulsen Apparatus,' 19 Oct 1916.

Useful for an understanding of the naval environment.

Adm 1/8484/116, 'Admiralty H.M.S. Marlborough in Action
31 May 1916, List of Casualties,' 7 June 1917. Useful for
appreciation of damage inflicted by one of Hipper's ships
at Jutland.

Adm 1/8498/201, 'Unrest Among Lower Deck Ratings, Admiralty,'
10 Sept 1917. Useful in providing context for disturbances
in German fleet, 1917.

Adm 1/8489/119, 'Refusal of duty by crew of H.M.S. Royal
George,' 11 June 1917. Useful in analyzing context of German
mutinies, 1917.

Adm 1/8495/188, 'Question of Maximum Age that Birching should
be inflicted on Boys,' 27 Aug 1917. Useful in analyzing
published accounts of World War I naval disciplinary problems.

Adm 1/8501/299, 'Questions Raised by Lower Deck Ratings'
Grievances,' 19 Oct 1917. Useful in analyzing the context
of German naval mutinies in World War I.

Adm 1/8512/28B, 'Proposed use of certain "B" and "X" Directional Wireless Stations for plotting positions of enemy Submarines,' 18 Jan 1918. Useful in evaluating the German communications security problems.

Adm 1/8556/110, 'Memorandum of Wartime Courtsmartial and Legal Aspects of Naval Discipline,' 16 Apr 1918. Useful in evaluating World War I naval discipline.

Adm 1/8581/25, 'German Naval Officers Accused of Committing Offenses Against the Laws of War,' 5 Feb 1920. This is interesting because Hipper is not mentioned. See German Ministry of Marine MSS supra for a listing concerning defence of these officers (F 151).

Admiralty 12 (General Intelligence)

Adm 12/1527/N 487, 'W/T Direction Finding Apparatus Mounted in German Ships in 1914.' Useful for understanding the naval environment.

Admiralty 116 (Cases)

Adm 116/866B, 'Miscellaneous Memoranda from Director Naval Intelligence and others from 1899 onwards.' Useful in outlining pre-war technical and political developments.

Adm 116/940B, 'Anglo-German Naval Relations 1902-1914.' Useful for understanding the naval environment.

Adm 116/1825, 'Internment of German Warships at Scapa Flow 1918-1919.' Useful in judging the extent of German demoralization. This includes signals between Hipper and Beatty on the surrender of the German fleet.

Adm 116/1931-2002, 'Naval Inter-Allied Commission of Control.' These records constitute a remarkable collation and collection of German technology and an interesting account of immediate post-war naval relations between Germany and her conquerors. File 1938 contains the correspondence with the German Naval Peace Commission and a list of plans and documents turned over to the Allies. Plans and documents relating to Hipper's battle cruisers are listed under National Maritime Museum below.

Adm 116/3130-3131, 'Naval Manoeuvres and their effect on sea strategy: the Fleet in event of war with Germany 1914-1916.' Helpful in evaluating the validity of German naval thinking, including Hipper's.

Admiralty 137 (1914-1918 War Histories)

Adm 137/342, 'Grand Fleet W/T Memoranda,' 1914-1918. Useful for determining British policy on wireless security.

Adm 137/1943, 1949, 3139, '28 Aug 1914 Action in the Bight,' 1914-1918. This file contains British after-action reports on the battle which almost cost Hipper his career. For the German records see F 4059 cited above.

Adm 137/1943, 2084, 'Reports related to the raid on Scarborough and Hartlepool 16 Dec 1914.' This file contains British reports useful for analyzing Hipper's tactical decisions. For the German records see F 4061 cited above.

Adm 137/1943, 1989, 2134, 2135, 2138, 2139, 'The Dogger Bank,' 24 Jan 1915. Useful for analyzing Hipper's actions in the battle. The German records are found in F 4062 cited above.

Adm 137/1906, 1945, 1946, 1988, 2089, 2134, 2137, 2139, 2141-42, 2151, 'The Battle of Jutland 31 May-1 June 1916,' Useful in understanding not only Hipper's actions but in supplying important data on Hipper's opposition. For the German records see F 4061 listed above.

Adm 137/1988, 'Grand Fleet Intelligence Office Files,' 1914-1918. Useful in understanding how much the British knew about Hipper's intentions, movements and materiel. This is a fairly general file dealing more with strategical intelligence than daily operations.

Adm 137/3838, 'Trials with various types of Explosive shells,' 1917-1918. This file is useful in understanding British materiel improvements made as a result of Jutland.

Adm 137/3839, 'Damage inflicted on (German) ships in the action 31 May-1 June 1916.' Naval Intelligence Division, Admiralty War Staff, 13 Jan 1917. This file indicates the British high command had a very accurate picture of the damage suffered by the German fleet at Jutland.

Adm 137/3849, 'Diary of High Seas Fleet Cruises,' 1906-1914. Useful for an evaluation of German officer personnel policy in the fleet, treatment of minorities in the German navy, reports on the 1917 (sic) mutiny, High Seas Fleet morale, press articles by German naval commentators on the Fleet

collapse. Useful in evaluating the 1917-1918 troubles in the German fleet.

Adm 137/3867, 'High Sea Fleet Exercises and Manoeuvres,' 1906-1914. These are interesting in that they do not specifically mention Hipper though there is some analysis of fleet commanders.

Adm 137/3891, 'Papers concerning the German Navy Mutinies and Armistice 1918-1919.' This file contains documents useful in analyzing Hipper's part in the mutiny and collapse of the German fleet in 1918.

Adm 137/3892-3893, 'High Sea Fleet.' This contains a fascinating collection of intercepted German wireless signals from 29 Oct 1918-11 Nov 1918 in both the North Sea and Baltic. A unique record.

Adm 137/3904, 'Details of German Fleet estimates, pensions, allowances and pay.' This file includes translations of German transcripts of hearings before the Reichstag Budget Committee 1912 when Tirpitz argued for additional fleet materiel.

b. Ministry of Defence Naval Historical Branch

This repository for certain microfilm collections and documents of the Imperial German Navy is located in the old War Office building, Whitehall, London. The voluminous Levetzow Nachlass was investigated here though it is listed and described formally in the German documents above. The following documents were consulted:

Panzertreffer--Zusammengestellt im Konstruktions-
Departement des Reichs-Marine-Amts (sic) nach den
Trefferaufnahmenabgeschlossen Jan 1917, (Hits on
 Armour-Assembled in the Construction Department, Imperial
 Naval Office, after Completion of Damage Studies). This
 document bears the stamp of the Naval Arsenal Library at
 Kiel which was destroyed in World War II. Useful because
 it is the most detailed account of German surface ship
 damage by shellfire. It includes many diagrams.

Gedanken über die Probleme der deutschen Seekriegsführung
im Weltkrieg. (Thoughts on the Problems of the German naval
 high command in the World War).by Admiral Kurt Assmann,
 chief, German Naval Historical Branch, 1935-1945; a type-
 script) of lecture delivered March 1938 at the Naval War
 College, Kiel; useful for analyzing Hipper's problems.

c. Ministry of Defence, Naval Library

Located in the Empress State building, Earl's Court, London,
 this is probably the western world's greatest single collec-
 tion of books on the naval art. The following were used:

Director of Naval Construction, Admiralty, Records of Warship
Construction During the War, 1914-1918 (1919).

CA 0116, N.I.D., A.W.S., Germany: Results of Firing
Practices 1912-1914. This document reveals the high gun-
 nery standards in the German fleet including Hipper's ships.

CB 1182, N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy July 1919. This unpublished official work is the most complete analysis of the Imperial German Navy extant in English and provides valuable background for understanding Hipper's naval environment. Though there are earlier editions this is the most complete.

CA 0111, N.I.D., A.W.S., German Navy Warfare 1914-1919.

This series of captured German naval manuals provide substantial information on German tactics.

CA 0121, N.I.D., A.W.S., Germany War Vessels 1914. This is an excellent summary of the characteristics and limitations of German ships, and discusses Hipper's ships in detail.

There is a remarkable correlation between this volume and Deutsche Kriegsflotte, F 50/66. cited above.

SL 3480, N.I.A.C.C., Report of the Visit of the Naval Inter-Allied Commission of Control Armour Experts to Germany, June 1920. Useful in establishing the technical parameters of the shell used in Hipper's ships.

d. National Maritime Museum

Located in Greenwich, London, this is the repository for what is probably the largest surviving collection of Imperial German Navy ships' plans. The plans were little more than a rumour until the writer began a systematic campaign lasting a year to get the Admiralty to catalog and release them for historical purposes.

Mr. J.D. Lawson, Naval Historical Branch, located the plans of Hipper's battle cruisers, some 700 drawings, in a MOD repository. Later Mr. Lawson located, cataloged, and forwarded the complete collection (over 2,000 drawings) of the N.I.A.C.C. Plans Office to the National Maritime Museum in December, 1973. These included battleships, cruisers, torpedoboats, and U-boats. The following plans were of use because they provided primary technical source material previously believed to have been destroyed in the 1944 bombing of the Naval Ministry in Berlin:

No. 14095, S.M.S. von der Tann, Fliegende Feuerleitungs- und Salvenzeichenanlage, 1910 (Rapid Fire Control and Salvo Signalling Installations). This is the clearest representation available of the early German dreadnought battle cruisers' fire control arrangement, and it also provides an illustration of the ship's construction and compartmentization.

No. 437918, S.M.S. von der Tann, Takehriss, 1910 (Rigging Plan). This was the best representation available of the first German battle cruiser; note she appears without torpedo nets.

No. 438329, S.M.S. Seydlitz, Telegraphenplan, Teil A, B, C, 31 May 1913, (Command and Communications Wiring Circuitry). This plan shows internal and external communications in Hipper's longtime flagship as well as the ship's construction and compartmentization.

No. 438329, S.M.S. Seydlitz, Einrichtung für Wasser, Längsschnitt, (Scuttles, Starboard Elevation). This plan shows the ship's pumping system, critical in damage control.

No. 428310, S.M.S. Moltke, Artillerie-Sprachrohrplan, Teil IIID, 3 November 1911, (Gunnery Voice Tubes Plan). This is a simplified plan and cross-section of the battle cruiser showing gunnery control installations.

No. 438312, S.M.S. Moltke, Längsschnitt, 13 September 1911, (Starboard Elevation). This is a full cutaway plan showing general arrangement and the most complete and detailed picture of what a German battle cruiser looked like.

No. 428312a, S.M.S. Moltke, Obere Ansicht, 13 September 1911, (Aircraft View). This plan provides a full overview of the ship's weatherdecks. It shows, among other things, the four range finders for the secondary armament mounted above the battery deck.

No. 428312e, S.M.S. Moltke, Panzerdeck, n.d., (Armoured Deck). This clearly shows the living arrangements for officers and men right down to the piano in the wardroom. It illustrates German ships' habitability as no other document ever has.

No. 428312c, S.M.S. Moltke, Batteriedeck, 13 September 1911, (Secondary Battery Deck). This plan shows the layout of the casemates for the 15 cm. secondary armament as well as the location and layout of administrative offices and protective bulkheading.

No. 42831m, S.M.S. Moltke, Hintere Querschnitte,

13 September 1911, (After-Bulkheads). This plan provides a first-hand look at the famous German compartmentization and is also useful to illustrate fore and aft access in German battle cruisers.

No. 439342, S.M.S. Moltke, Kabelschema der Richtungweiser- und Folgezeiger-Anlage für die Schwere-und Mittel-Artillerie,

1911, (Wiring Diagram of the Direction pointer and result indicator system for the heavy and medium guns). This represents the most complete diagram of German fire control design yet available for ships of Hipper's time. Note how the searchlights are directly integrated into the fire control system.

3. United States Navy Manuscripts

United States Navy papers before 1945 are located at the National Archives, Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C. Two collections were particularly useful in helping to establish the naval environment in which Hipper operated. They were Record Group 38, Office of Naval Intelligence (Registers) 1886-1922, and Record Group 45, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library 1911-1927.

RG 38, Box 119, O.N.I. Registers. This contains files on German navy punishments, organization and administration, training, inspections, national service, service regulations for the Marine Akademie (Naval War College), School of Naval Architects, captains' procedures, Admiralty Staff organization, and Mining Department organization.

RG 38, Box 120, O.N.I. Registers. This contains a file on the sea service of the Admiralty Staff Officer Corps, a file on food for German crews, a file on mining construction and training, a file on torpedo training courses in the German Navy, a file on the changes in the German naval high command, an article on the naval schools and training system, a file on the staffs of German flag officers. The information dates from 1901 to 1918.

RG 45, Box 121, Naval Records Collection. This contains notes on the staffs of German flag officers and also gives an organization table for the staff of the High Seas Fleet, battle squadron commander and deputy battle squadron commander.

RG 45, Box 200, Naval Records Collection. This contains a general description of the activities of the German and Austro-Hungarian navies 1914-1918 and an evaluation of various German admirals including Hipper.

RG 45, Box 267, Naval Records Collection. This contains an analysis of the relative standings of the principal navies dated 1 May 1918 and a 1917 Naval War College comparison of U. S. and German battleships in a possible battle.

RG 45, Box 752, Naval Records Collection. This contains a copy of the British Admiralty D.N.I. publication, 'German Navy,' cited above, as well as numerous intelligence reports from Berlin 1914-1916.

RG 45, Box 779, Naval Records Collection. This contains a file on early U. S. naval communications and a study of German naval communications in 1914.

RG 45, Box 802, Naval Records Collection. This contains the records of the battle of Heligoland Bight, Dogger Bank, the bombardments of the English coast; some interesting analyses by the American Navy on all these actions; English translations of the German official history by the Office of Naval Intelligence.

RG 45, Box 802k, Naval Records Collection. This contains evidence it was German policy to conceal the identity of force and squadron commanders from their enemies; an interesting damage report on H.M.S. Marlborough after Jutland; a letter from Hipper thanking an American naval author for a copy of yet another analysis of Jutland, dated 5 July 1921.

RG 45, Box 803, 804, Naval Records Collection. This contains a report by Admiral Scheer on the battle of Jutland which sheds new light on the Hipper-Scheer relationship; records of the Jutland action including an English translation of the German official history; translations of copies of almost all the German after-action documents concerning Jutland; a copy of the British Admiralty appreciation of the battle; an interesting report on the damage to H.M.S. Warspite.

RG 45, Box 851, Naval Records Collection. This contains additional material on all the actions of the war at sea 1914-1918; also two volumes on the commerce warfare by Erich Raeder in English translation.

RG 45, Box 852, Naval Records Collection. This contains a summary of High Seas Fleet activities and some of the problems in planning should the United States have to fight the German Navy alone in 1914 to 1916; a criticism of the British dis-

tribution of force; evidence of concern about a German fleet sortie against the Thames Estuary.

RG 80, Box 124, Naval Records Collection, Secretary of the Navy, General Correspondence. This contains the United States records concerning the Naval Inter-Allied Commission of Control 1918-1921, useful for a study of German naval technology.

B. Writer's Correspondence

The following persons were contacted to further the course of research. Dates of the letters and communications received from these people are cited in the text where appropriate.

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Kapitän zur See K. T. Raeder, FGN, Naval Attache, London,
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Fr. Gabriel Streitell, Minich; Hipper's niece.

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Kontre-Admiral Werner Schunemann, FGN, Naval Attache, London,
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